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Select English Classics

THE
BOOK OF ELEGIES

EDITED WITH NOTES

BY

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PUBLISHERS' NOTE.



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THIS is the third volume of a series of SELECT ENGLISH CLASSICS which the publishers have in course of preparation. The series will include an extensive variety of selections chosen from the different departments of English literature, and arranged and annotated for the use of classes in schools. It will embrace, among other things, representative specimens from all the best English writers, whether of poetry or of prose ; selections from English dramatic literature, especially of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries ; choice extracts from the writings of the great essayists ; selections from famous English allegories ; a volume of elegies and elegiacal poetry ; studies of English prose fiction, with illustrative specimens, etc. Each volume will contain copious notes, critical, explanatory, and biographical, besides the necessary vocabularies, glossaries, and indexes ; and the series when complete will present a varied and comprehensive view of much that is best in English literature. For supplementary reading, as well as for systematic class instruction, the books will possess many peculiarly valuable as well as novel features ; while their attractive appearance, combined with the sterling quality of their contents, will commend them for general reading and make them desirable acquisitions for every library.

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FORE WORD.



THE Idyls of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus have served as models for no inconsiderable portion of our modern pastoral and elegiac poetry. They have been imitated by Spenser, improved upon by Milton, parodied by Pope and Gay, copied after by Shelley, and loved and admired by all the poets. By the three specimens presented in this book most of the elegies in our own language have been either directly or remotely suggested, or in some way modified. No apology, therefore, would seem necessary for the admission of these translations from the Greek into a volume of select English classics. No Book of Elegies could be complete without them.

THE SONG OF THYRSIS
TOUCHING
THE SORROW OF DAPHNIS

FROM THE FIRST IDYL OF THEOCRITUS

WRITTEN IN GREEK ABOUT 270 B.C.

An English Prose Version

The shepherd Thyrsis, famed for his skill in song, sat one day in the shade of a pine, close by a clear, cool spring that gushed up out of the earth. A goatherd lounged at his ease on the grass and played sweet tunes upon his pipe. "Ah, friend," said Thyrsis, "thou dost in truth play well upon that reed: next to Pan thou shouldst have the prize. If he take the horned he-goat, then the she-goat shall be thine; but if he choose the she-goat for his meed, then the year-old kid must fall to thee." Well pleased was the goatherd with this high praise, and he paid it back in kind. "Thy song, good Thyrsis," said he, "is far more sweet than that of the stream as it falls from the edge of the rock. If the Muses for their meed bear off the young ewe, thou shalt have the lamb for thy gift; but if it please them best to take the lamb, then thou shalt take the ewe as thine own." "Come, sit thou here and pipe me a song," said Thyrsis, "and I will watch thy flocks." "Nay," quoth the goatherd, "it is not right good for us to pipe at mid-day. We fear Pan. But, come with me to the shade of yon elm, and do thou sing to me the song of Daphnis and his grief. If thou wilt but sing as thou didst one day, I will let thee milk — ay, three times — a goat that hath twins, and whose milk doth fill two pails. A deep bowl of ivy-wood, too, will I give thee, rubbed with sweet bees-wax, — a two-eared bowl, carved with great skill, for which I gave a goat and a large cheese-cake of white milk, and which has not yet touched my lips."

Thus urged, Thyrsis sang of the sorrow of Daphnis.

The Song of Thyrsis

TOUCHING

THE SORROW OF DAPHNIS.



¹ *Begin, ye Muses dear, begin the shepherd's lay!*

² Thyrsis I am, and this is the song I sing on Etna's slopes. — ³ Where were ye, Nymphs, when Daphnis pined and died? Were ye not then in the far fair dells where ⁴ Peneus flows, or in the vales where Pindus rears his head? For ye staid not, I ween, by the broad stream ⁵ Anapus, nor on the high top of Etna's mount, nor yet on the weird Acis' banks.

Begin, ye Muses dear, begin the shepherd's lay!

⁶ For him the wild beasts, for him the wolves did cry. ¹⁰ For him, when dead, the king of beasts in the dark woods wept.

Begin, ye Muses dear, begin the shepherd's lay!

At his feet the kine grieved sore, ay, herds of bulls, and all the young cows and sad-faced calves did mourn.

Begin, ye Muses dear, begin the shepherd's lay!

First ⁷ Hermes from the hill did come, and thus to Daphnis spake: "Who is it that gives thee pain, my child? For the love of whom dost thou pine and die?"

Begin, ye Muses dear, begin the shepherd's lay!

Then came those who tend the kine, the sheep, and the goats when in the fields they feed, and ⁸all asked him what harm had caused him so much pain. Came, too, ⁹Priapus, and said: "Poor Daphnis, why dost thou grieve, while for thee the fair maid fleets through all the glades and past all streams in search of thee?"

Begin, ye Muses dear, begin the shepherd's lay!

"Ah! thou art a swain too slack in love, and now thou ¹⁰art past help! They say thou dost mind the cows, but now thou art most fit to keep the goats! For he that keeps the goats, when he marks the grown-up kids at their play, looks on with well-pleased eyes, and fain would be as they. And thou, when thou dost hear the young girls and see them smile, dost gaze with glad eyes, and yet dost not join them in the dance."

Begin, ye Muses dear, begin the shepherd's lay!

Yet to these Daphnis said not one word; but his grief he fed, and his own sad love he bare, and bare it still ²⁰to the end that stern fate at the last did bring.

Begin, ye Muses dear, begin the shepherd's lay!

Ay, and there came, too, sweet ¹⁰Cypris, queen of love, and a smile was on her face though wrath was in her heart; and to the sad shepherd thus she spake: "Daphnis, I did hear thy boast that thou wouldst ¹¹bend Love to a fall! Hast not thou thine own self been bent, yea, thrown by Love?"

Begin, ye Muses dear, begin the shepherd's lay!

And Daphnis these words spake to her: "Harsh ³⁰Cypris, Cypris to be feared, Cypris the bane of men,

now thou dost know that my last sun too soon will set ;
yet Daphnis in realm of shades shall prove great grief
to Love.

Begin, ye Muses dear, begin the shepherd's lay !

“ As to Cypris, is it not said that he who kept the
herds — ¹² But get thee to Mount Ida. Haste thee to
Anchises. There oak trees grow ; here the marsh plants
thrive, and here the sweet hum of the bees is heard at
the hives !

Begin, ye Muses dear, begin the shepherd's lay !

10

“ Thy loved ¹³ Adonis, too, is still in the bloom of
youth, for he tends the sheep and kills the hares, and
hunts wild beasts in the deep, dark wood. Nay, go and
take thy stand once more in the ¹⁴ fight with Diomed,
and say, ‘ I have struck down Daphnis, him who kept
the herds, come now and try thy strength with me ! ’

Begin, ye Muses dear, begin the shepherd's lay !

“ Ye wolves, ye bears, and ye wild beasts that lurk in
dens and in the caves of the hills, fare ye well ! By you
no more shall Daphnis be seen in the wood, no more in ²⁰
the groves where grow the oaks, no more in the dells
between the hills. Fare thee well, ¹⁵ Arethusa ; and ye
brooks, good night, that pour down ¹⁶ Thymbris your
clear, cool streams.

Begin, ye Muses dear, begin the shepherd's lay !

“ Here am I — Daphnis — who tend in these fields
my herd of young kine — Daphnis, who leads the bulls
to the cool stream that they may drink.

Begin, ye Muses dear, begin the shepherd's lay !

“ O Pan, Pan, if thou art on the high hills of ¹⁷ Lycæus, ³⁰

or if thou dost range o'er great ¹⁸ Mænalus, haste thou to the Sicilian isle; or leave the far-off cape of ¹⁹ Helice, and the tall cairn that marks the tomb of ²⁰ Lycaon's son — a work which seems fair, yea, most fair, in the eyes of the blessed.

Now cease, ye Muses dear, now cease the shepherd's lay!

"Come, O my prince, and take this fair pipe, sweet to taste and smell from the wax-stopped joints; take it, ¹⁰ it will fit thy lips well! For, in truth, I am at last ²¹ dragged by Love to the dark land of Hades.

Now cease, ye Muses dear, now cease the shepherd's lay!

²² "Now violets bear, ye sharp briars; and may ye thorns bear, violets. And may narcissus bloom on the juniper tree! May all things be changed in kind, and let the pine bear pears — for Daphnis dies! And may the stag hunt the hounds, and the owls from the hills sing songs more sweet than those of the nightingales."

²⁰ *Now cease, ye Muses dear, now cease the shepherd's lay!*

Thus Daphnis spake, and thus he made an end: and fain would Aphrodite raise him up. But all the threads of the ²³ Fates, I ween, were now spun out. And Daphnis went down the ²⁴ stream. The swift wave washed far from the land the man the Muses loved, the man to the Nymphs most dear.

Now cease, ye Muses dear, now cease the shepherd's lay!

³⁰ And now, give thou me the she-goat and the bowl,

that I may milk her and pour it out, a thank-gift to the Muses. O hail, hail, ye Muses dear, and oft-times hail ! And I to you a song more sweet than this will sing ²⁵ in the days to come !

NOTES.

THE AUTHOR.

"Theocritus, the Bucolic poet, was a Syracusan by extraction, and the son of Simichidas, as he says himself, ' Simichidas, pray whither through the noon dost thou drag thy feet?' (*Idyl* vii.). Some say that this was an assumed name, for he seems to have been snub-nosed, and that his father was Praxagoras, and his mother Philinna. He became the pupil of Philetas and Asclepiades, of whom he speaks in his seventh *Idyl*, and flourished about the time of Ptolemy Lagus. He gained much fame for his skill in bucolic poetry. According to some, his original name was Moschus, and Theocritus was a name later assumed."—*Notice usually prefixed to his Idyls, translated by Andrew Lang.*

Of the life of Theocritus, but little is known. He was born probably at Syracuse about the year 315 B.C., and received at least a portion of his education at Alexandria. His early poetic efforts were so successful that he was rewarded by the patronage of Ptolemy Philadelphus, in whose honor some of his *Idyls* were written. He afterwards returned to Syracuse, where he spent the latter part of his life, and where much of his best work in poetry was done. Of the date and manner of his death, there is no trustworthy record. He was the inventor of pastoral poetry. "He stands alone, with a crowd of imitators at a wide interval of merit."

THE POEM.

The Song of Thyrsis is a part, and the chief *motif*, of the first *Idyl* of Theocritus, of which the following is a brief analysis: "The shepherd Thyrsis meets a goatherd in a shady place beside a spring, and at his invitation, sings the Lament for Daphnis. This ideal hero of Greek pastoral song had won for his bride the fairest of the Nymphs. Confident in the strength of his passion, he boasted that Love could never subdue him to a new affection. Love avenged himself by making Daphnis desire a strange maiden, but to this temptation he never yielded. The song tells how the cattle and the wild things of the wood bewailed him; how

Hermes and Priapus gave him counsel in vain; and how with his last breath he retorted the taunts of the implacable Aphrodite. The scene is in Sicily."

1. **Begin, ye Muses dear.** This form of invocation has been often imitated by the later poets. See Moschus's *Lament for Bion* (page 39) : —

"Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge!"

Compare also with Virgil, *Eclogue viii.* : —

"Begin with me, my pipe, Mænalian strains!"

And with Pope, *Pastoral iii.* : —

"Resound, ye hills, resound my mournful strains."

Also with Milton, *Lycidas*, line 15 (see page 79). And with Spenser, *Shepheards Calender, November* : —

"Morne now my Muse, now morne with heavy cheare."

2. **Thyrsis.** The name is very common in pastoral poetry. See Virgil, *Eclogue vii.*, "In alternate verses the two began to contend. These Corydon, those Thyrsis, each in his turn recited." Also Milton, *L'Allegro* : —

"Hard by a cottage chimney smokes
From betwixt two aged oaks,
Where Corydon and Thyrsis, met,
Are at their savoury dinner set."

3. **Where were ye, Nymphs?** Doubtless having reference to the nurturing care which the Nymphs had had for Daphnis. The line is imitated by Milton, *Lycidas*, line 50. Also by Pope in *Pastoral ii.* : —

"Where stray ye, Nymphs, in what lawn or grove,
While your Alexis pines in hopeless love?"

See Virgil, *Eclogue x.* : —

"What groves, ye virgin Naiads, or what lawns detained you,
While Gallus pined with ill-requested love?"

See also Shelley's *Adonais*, ii. 1, and Spenser's *Astrophel*, 128.

Daphnis. The original Daphnis, whose grief is celebrated in this Idyl, was the son of Hermes and the friend of both Pan and Apollo. His mother was a Nymph, and he was placed while an infant in a laurel grove, whence his name (from Gr. *daphne*, a laurel tree). He was brought up by the Nymphs, and became a shepherd on the slopes of Mount Etna.

There he tended his sheep, was taught music by Pan, and invented bucolic poetry with which to entertain Artemis while she was hunting. A Naiad, who fell in love with him, made him swear never to love any other maiden. He kept his promise for a time, but at length became hopelessly enamoured of a princess. Thereupon the Naiad, according to some, punished him with blindness. Others say that she changed him to a stone: —

"This is that modest shepherd, he
That only dare salute, but ne'er could be
Brought to kiss any, hold discourse, or sing,
Whisper, or boldly ask."

Fletcher, The Faithful Shepherdess.

See Virgil, *Eclogue* v.: —

"The shepherds wept Daphnis, cut off by cruel death."

Longos, a Greek sophist (4th or 5th century A.D.), wrote a prose-pastoral love story entitled *Daphnis and Chloe*. John Gay (1688–1732) wrote a poem with the same title; and William Browne published a pastoral called *Daphnis and Lycidas* in 1727.

4. **Peneus**. A river in Thessaly flowing through the vale of Tempe, between the mountains Ossa and Olympus. — **Pindus**. A range of mountains in northern Greece. If the Nymphs were here, they were about four hundred miles from Daphnis, on Mount Etna.

5. **Anapus** and **Acis** were rivers in Sicily, near the foot of Mount Etna. In his Seventh Idyl Theocritus again mentions the Anapus: —

"Through Polypheme did such sweet nectar glance,
That made the shepherd of Anapus dance."

Acis was a Sicilian shepherd, the son of Faunus, and beloved by the Nymph Galatea. The monster Polypheme, jealous of him, crushed him under a huge rock, and his blood became the river Acis (now Fiume de Jaci), which flows from under a rock at the foot of Mount Etna.

6. **For him the wild beasts did cry**. Imitated by Moschus in his *Lament for Bion* (see page 40). And by Virgil, *Eclogue* v.: —

"Even the African lions mourned thy death."

Also by Pope, *Pastoral* iii.: —

"For her the feather'd choirs neglect their song."

Also by Spenser, *Shepherds Calender*, November: —

"The beastes in forrest wayle as they were woode."

Compare with *A Pastorall Æglogue* (line 76).

7. **Hermes.** Daphnis was the son of Hermes, hence the latter addresses him as "my child." Hermes was especially worshipped by the shepherds, whose patron he was, and he is often mentioned in connection with Pan and the Muses.

8. **all asked what harm had caused him so much pain.** Compare this passage with Milton's *Lycidas*, lines 91, 92; also with Pope's *Pastoral* iii. : —

"Pan came and asked what magic caused my smart."

Theocritus represents Hermes, the Shepherds, Pan, Priapus, and Cypris as bewailing the misfortunes of Daphnis. Moschus (see page 40) introduces Apollo, the Satyrs, the Priapi, the Panes, and Echo as mourning for Bion; Milton (see page 82) speaks of Neptune, Camus, and St. Peter in connection with the sorrow for *Lycidas*; Shelley (see page 119) introduces Dreams, Desires, Adorations, Destinies, Phantasies, Sorrow, Sighs, and Pleasure among the mourners for Adonais.

9. **Priapus.** A god of the gardens, of flocks, of bees, and of fruitfulness. Pausanias says: "Priapus is honored elsewhere by those who keep sheep and goats or stocks of bees; but the Lampsakenes regard him more than any other of the gods, calling him the son of Dionysos and Aphrodite." See Virgil, *Eclogue* vii. : "A pail of milk and these cakes, Priapus, are enough for thee to expect. Thou art the keeper of a poor, ill-tended garden."

10. **Cypris.** Hesiod (*Theog.* 188 *seq.*) says that when Aphrodite, the goddess of love, sprang into life from the foam of the sea, she first approached the island of Cythera, and then proceeding onward, finally landed upon Cyprus. Hence she is sometimes called Cypris, or the Cyprian, and sometimes Cytherea.

11. **bend love to a fall.** The original Greek expression is a term used in describing wrestling matches, and means to master, to overthrow.

12. **But get thee to Mount Ida.** By a sudden breaking off and turn of expression — called aposiopesis — Daphnis here taunts Aphrodite by bringing to remembrance her intrigue with Anchises on Mount Ida. For an example of the similar use of this figure, see *Exodus* xxxii. 32; also Virgil, *Æneid*, i. 135: "Dare you, winds, without my sovereign leave to embroil heaven and earth, and raise such mountains? Whom I — But first it is right to assuage the tumultuous waves."

13. **Adonis.** For a brief version of the story of Adonis, see page 29 of this volume. Observe Daphnis's taunting manner.

14. For a description of the fight with Diomed, see Homer's *Iliad*, v. 336: "Now Tydeides (Diomed) had made onslaught with pitiless weapon on the Cyprian, knowing how she was a coward goddess, and none of those

that have mastery in battle of the warriors,—no Athene she nor Enyo, waster of cities. . . . And over her Diomed of the loud war-cry shouted afar: ‘Refrain thee, thou daughter of Zeus, from war and fighting. Is it not enough that thou beguilest feeble women? But if in battle thou wilt mingle, verily I deem that thou shalt shudder at the name of battle if thou hear it even from afar.’”

15. **Arethusa.** The Nymph Arethusa, being pursued by the river-god Alpheus, was changed into the fountain of Arethusa in the island of Ortygia, near the Sicilian coast. She was sometimes reckoned as a Nymph of Sicily, and as the special patron of pastoral poetry. Virgil, *Eclogue* x. 1, invokes her aid: “Grant unto me, O Arethusa, this last essay.” See Milton, *Lycidas*, line 84; also Shelley’s beautiful poem, *Arethusa*.

16. **Thymbris**, a mountain in Sicily.

17. **Lycæus**, a lofty mountain in Arcadia, the birthplace of Pan and one of his chief sanctuaries.

18. **Mænalus**, a mountain in Arcadia, the favorite haunt of Pan. It was covered with pine-trees. See Virgil, *Eclogue* viii.: “Mænalus always has a vocal grove and shaking pines; he ever hears the lover of shepherds, and Pan, the first who suffered not the reeds to be neglected.”

19. **Helice** was a city of Achaia, swallowed up by an earthquake in 373 B.C. Reference is made here most probably to some other locality of the same name, perhaps in Arcadia, as indicated by the close connection of the thought with Lycaon.

20. **Lycaon**, king of Arcadia. For his impiety he, with all his sons except Nyctimus, the youngest, was slain with lightning; or, according to other stories, they were changed to wolves (Gr. *lukos*, a wolf). Among the pastoral poets tombs are often referred to as prominent landmarks.

21. **dragged by Love.** See Pope’s *Ode on St. Cecilia’s Day*:—

“Love, strong as death, the poet led
To the pale nations of the dead.”

22. **Imitated by Pope**, *Pastoral* iii.:—

“Let opening roses knotted oaks adorn,
And liquid amber drop from every thorn.”

See *Luke* vi. 44.

23. See note 34, on *Lycidas*, page 90.

24. The stream of Acheron, which the shades of the dead must cross before entering Hades.

25. **in the days to come.** See the closing lines in *Adonis*, “Thou must wail again next year.” And in *Lycidas*, “To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.”

"There can be no doubt that the bucolic vein was early and strongly developed among Sicilian shepherds. The use of the shepherd's pipe and of responsive song was early developed in the country, and from the oldest time in some peculiar relation to the shepherd life in the mountains of Arcadia — worshipping the same god, Pan, honoring the same traditions, and pursuing the same habits. It even appears to me that in the great days of Gelon and Hieron there was a considerable emigration from Arcadia to Sicily, for we know that their mercenary armies were recruited from Arcadia, and doubtless the veterans were better rewarded with upland pastures in rich Sicily than by returning to their harsh and wintry home. But the Arcadian music found itself already at home in a country where the legends of the shepherd Daphnis were older than Stesichorus, and had been raised by him into classical literature. According to various authorities, Daphnis was brought up in a grove of laurels, and being an accomplished singer, and taught by Pan to play on the pipe, he became the companion of Artemis in her hunting, and delighted her with his music. His tragic end, which is connected with his love for a nymph and his faithlessness, was variously told, and these versions were the favorite subject of pastoral lays, which were attached to the worship of Artemis throughout Sicily, and celebrated in musical contests at her feasts in Syracuse, where shepherds sang alternately in what was called Priapean verse. . . . The shepherds of Theocritus are not pure and innocent beings, living in a garden of Eden or an imaginary Arcadia, free from sin and care. They are men of like passion as we are, gross and mean enough for ordinary life. But though artificially painted by a literary townsman, they are real shepherds, living in a real country, varying in culture and refinement, but all speaking human sentiments without philosophy and artifice. . . . It were unjust to deny Theocritus the noble position he deserves among the great and matchless masters of Greek poetry, though to him the Muse came last, 'as to one born out of due season.'" — *Mahaffy*.

THE LAMENT FOR ADONIS

AN IDYL

*INTENDED TO BE SUNG AT THE SPRING FESTIVAL
IN ALEXANDRIA IN HONOR OF ADONIS*

THE FIRST IDYL OF BION OF SMYRNA

WRITTEN IN GREEK ABOUT 265 B.C.

- I. *An English Prose Version by Rev. J. Banks*
- II. *An English Metrical Version by Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

The oldest of love stories : The Sun looked down and smiled upon the Earth. And she beholding him in his beauty, put on her many-hued garments and joyfully claimed him as her own. Then the Loves danced at their betrothal, and the Father of all blessed their union. And in fields and forests, in upland glades and lowland meadows, their nuptial song was sung; and life and gladness, youth and beauty, sprang everywhere into being. But, as the Seasons passed, the unwilling Sun was wooed by envious Darkness, his light was obscured by clouds, his glory was dimmed, his beauty was shrouded with shade. On the wooded hill-tops he lingered and languished, loath to leave his lovely bride. But at length the queen of the shadow-land prevailed, and carried him away to her gloomy abode. Earth lost her lovely lord and with him her matchless beauty. "Woe, woe," the groves lamented; and the oak trees in the valley shuddered for grief. The rivulets ceased their laughter, and the mountain brooks stood still. The leaves of the forest flushed red in their anguish, and in every field and wooded dell Earth wailed piteously a wild dirge for her lover. Then, touched at the sight of the universal sorrow, the All-father decreed that after six months had passed, the Sun should return to his bride, and, renewing his youth, should again gladden the Earth with his caresses. Six months in every twelve he should smile upon her; six months in every twelve he should abide in the land of shadows.

The Sun is Adonis; the Earth is Venus, sometimes called Cytherea; the queen of the shadow-land is stern Persephone, the maiden of Hades. While hunting in the forest, Adonis is slain by a cruel beast—a fierce wild-boar. Persephone carries him away to the realms of death.

Venus wails for Adonis; the Loves join in the lament.

The Lament for Adonis.

PROSE VERSION.



I wail for ¹Adonis ; beauteous Adonis is dead.

Dead is beauteous Adonis ; the Loves join in the wail. ²Sleep no more, Venus, in purple vestments ; rise, wretched goddess, in thy robes of woe, and beat thy bosom, and say to all, "Beauteous Adonis hath perished."

I wail for Adonis ; the Loves join in the wail.

Low lies beauteous Adonis on the mountains, having his white thigh smitten by a tusk, a white tusk, and he inflicts pain on Venus, as he breathes out his life ¹⁰ faintly ; but adown his white skin trickles the black blood ; and his eyes are glazed 'neath the lids, and the rose flies from his lip ; and round about it dies also the kiss which Venus will never relinquish. To Venus, indeed, his kiss, even though he lives not, is pleasant, yet Adonis knew not that she kissed him as he died.

I wail for Adonis ; the Loves wail in concert.

A cruel, cruel wound hath Adonis in his thigh, but a greater wound doth ³Cytherea bear at her heart. Around that youth indeed faithful hounds whined, and ²⁰ ⁴Oread Nymphs wept ; but Aphrodite, having let fall her braided hair, wanders up and down the glades, sad,

unkempt, unsandalled, and the brambles tear her as she goes, and cull her sacred blood: then wailing piercingly, she is borne through long valleys, crying for her ⁵ Assyrian spouse, and calling on her youth. But around him dark blood was gushing, and his breasts were empurpled from his thighs, and the parts of the body white before, became now deep red.

Alas, alas for Cytherea ; the Loves join in the wail.

She hath lost her beauteous spouse, she hath lost with
10 him her divine beauty. Fair beauty had Venus when
Adonis was living; but with Adonis perished the fair
form of Venus, alas, alas! All mountains and the oaks
say, "Alas for Adonis!" And ⁶ rivers sorrow for the
woes of Aphrodite, and springs on the mountains weep
for her Adonis, and flowers redden from grief; whilst
Cytherea sings mournfully along all woody mountain
passes, and through cities. Alas, alas for Cytherea,
beauteous Adonis hath perished! And Echo cried in
response, "Beauteous Adonis hath perished!" ⁷ Who
20 would not have lamented the dire love of Venus?
Alas! alas! when she saw, when she perceived the
wound of Adonis, which none might stay, when she saw
gory blood about his wan thigh, unfolding wide her
arms, she sadly cried, "Stay, ill-fated Adonis! Adonis,
stay, that I may find thee for the last time, that I may
enfold thee around, and mingle kisses with kisses.
Rouse thee a little, Adonis, and again this last time kiss
me; kiss me just so far as there is life in thy kiss, till
from thy heart thy spirit shall have ebbd into my lips
30 and soul, and I shall have drained thy sweet love-potion,
and have drunk out thy love; and I will treasure this
kiss, even as Adonis himself, since thou, ill-fated one,

dost flee from me. Thou fliest afar, O Adonis, and comest unto ⁸ Acheron, and its gloomy, cruel king ; but wretched I live, and am a goddess, and cannot follow thee. Take, ⁹ Proserpine, my spouse : for thou art thyself far more powerful than I, and the whole of what is beautiful falls to thy share ; yet I am all-hapless, and feel insatiate grief, and mourn for Adonis, since to my sorrow he is dead, and I am afraid of thee ! Art thou dying, O thrice-regretted ? Then ¹⁰ my longing is fled as a dream ; and widowed is Cytherea, and idle are ¹⁰ the Loves along my halls ; and with thee has my ¹¹ charmed girdle been undone ; nay, why, rash one, didst thou hunt ? Beauteous as thou wert, ¹² wast thou mad enough to contend with wild beasts ? ”

Thus lamented Venus ; the Loves join in the wail.

Alas, alas, for Cytherea, beauteous Adonis has perished ! The ¹³ Paphian goddess sheds as many tears as Adonis pours forth blood ; and these all on the ground become flowers : ¹⁴ the blood begets a rose, and the tears the anemone. Lament no more, Venus, thy wooer in ²⁰ the glades : there is a goodly couch, there is a bed of leaves ready for Adonis ; this bed of thine, Cytherea, dead Adonis occupies ; and though a corpse, he is beautiful,—a beautiful corpse, as it were sleeping.

Lay him down on the soft vestments in which he was wont to pass the night ; in which with thee along the night he would take his holy sleep on a couch all of gold ; yearn thou for Adonis, sad-visaged though he be now ; and ¹⁵ lay him amid chaplets and flowers ; all with him, since he is dead, ay, ¹⁶ all flowers have become ³⁰ withered ; but sprinkle him with myrtles, sprinkle him with unguents, with perfumes : perish all perfumes, thy perfume, Adonis, hath perished. Delicate Adonis

reclines in purple vestments; and about him weeping Loves set up the wail, having their ¹⁷locks shorn for Adonis; — and one was trampling on his arrows, another on his bow, and another was ¹⁸breaking his well-feathered quiver; and one has loosed the sandal of Adonis, while another is carrying water in golden ewers, and a third is bathing his thighs; and another behind him is fanning Adonis with his wings.

The Loves join in the wail for Cytherea herself:
 10 Hymenæus has quenched every torch at the door-posts, and shredded the nuptial wreath; and no more is ¹⁹Hymen, no more Hymen the song that is sung, alas! alas! is chanted. Alas, alas for Adonis! wail the Graces, far more than Hymenæus, for the son of ²⁰Cinyras, saying one with another, “Beauteous Adonis hath perished!” and far more piercingly speak they than thou, ²¹Dione. The Muses, too, strike up the lament for Adonis, and invoke him by song, but he heeds them not; not indeed that he is unwilling, but Proserpine
 20 does not release him. Cease, Cytherea, thy laments; refrain this day from thy dirges. ²²Thou must wail again and weep again another year.

The Lament for Adonis.

METRICAL VERSION.

I mourn for ¹Adonis — Adonis is dead;

Fair Adonis is dead, and the Loves are lamenting.

²Sleep, Cypris, no more on thy purple-strewed bed;

Arise, wretch stoled in black, beat thy breast unrelenting,

And shriek to the worlds, “Fair Adonis is dead!”

I mourn for Adonis — the Loves are lamenting.

He lies on the hills in his beauty and death ;
The white tusk of a boar has transpierced his white
thigh.

³ Cytherea grows mad at his thin, gasping breath,
While the black blood drips down on the pale ivory,
And his eyeballs lie quenched with the weight of his
brows ;

The rose fades from his lips, and upon them just parted
The kiss dies the goddess consents not to lose,
Though the kiss of the dead cannot make her light-
hearted ;

He knows not who kisses him dead in the dew. 10

I mourn for Adonis — the Loves are lamenting.

Deep, deep in the thigh is Adonis's wound ;
But a deeper, is Cypris's bosom presenting.

The youth lieth dead while his dogs howl around,
And the ⁴ nymphs weep aloud from the mists of the
hill,

And the poor Aphrodite, with tresses unbound,
All dishevelled, unsandalled, shrieks mournful and shrill
Through the dusk of the groves. The thorns, tearing
her feet,

Gather up the red flower of her blood which is holy,

Each footstep she takes ; and the valleys repeat 20
The sharp cry she utters, and draw it out slowly.

She calls on her spouse, her ⁵ Assyrian, on him
Her own youth, while the dark blood spreads over his
body,

The chest taking hue from the gash in the limb,
And the bosom once ivory turning to ruddy.

Ah, ah, Cytherea — the loves are lamenting.

She lost her fair spouse, and so lost her fair smile :
When he lived she was fair, by the whole world's con-
senting,

Whose fairness is dead with him : woe worth the
while !

All the mountains above, and the oaklands below,

Murmur, ah, ah, Adonis ! the streams overflow
Aphrodite's deep wail ; ⁶ river-fountains in pity

Weep soft in the hills ; and the flowers as they blow
Redden outward with sorrow, while all hear her go

10 With the song of her sadness through mountain and
city.

Ah, ah, Cytherea ! Adonis is dead.

Fair Adonis is dead — Echo answers Adonis !

⁷ Who weeps not for Cypris, when, bowing her head,
She stares at the wound where it gapes and astonies ?
When — ah, ah — she saw how the blood ran away
And empurpled the thigh, and with wild hands flung
out,

Said with sobs, " Stay, Adonis ! unhappy one, stay.

Let me feel thee once more, let me ring thee about
With the clasp of my arms, and press kiss into kiss !

20 Wait a little, Adonis, and kiss me again,

For the last time, beloved ; and but so much of this
That the kiss may learn life from the warmth of the
strain !

Till thy breath shall exude from thy soul to my mouth,
To my heart, and, the love-charm I once more receiv-
ing,

May drink thy love in it, and keep of a truth
That one kiss in the place of Adonis the living.

Thou fliest me, mournful one, fliest me far,
 My Adonis, and seekest the ⁸ Acheron portal;
 To Hell's cruel king goest down with a scar,
 While I weep and live on like a wretched immortal,
 And follow no step! O ⁹ Persephone, take him,
 My husband! thou'rt better and brighter than I,
 So all beauty flows down to thee: *I* cannot make him
 Look up at my grief: there's despair in my cry,
 Since I wail for Adonis who died to me — died to me —
 Then, I fear *thee*! Art thou dead, my adored? 10
 Passion ¹⁰ ends like a dream in the sleep that's denied
 to me,
 Cypris is widowed; the Loves seek their lord
 All the house through in vain. Charm of ¹¹ cestus has
 ceased
 With thy clasp! Oh, too bold in the hunt past pre-
 venting,
 Ay, ¹² mad, thou so fair, to have strife with a beast!"
Thus the goddess wailed on; and the Loves are lament-
ing.

Ah, ah, Cytherea, Adonis is dead! Adonis is dead.
 She wept tear after tear with the blood which was shed,
 And both turned into flowers for the earth's garden-
 close, —

¹⁴ Her tear to the wind-flower; his blood to the rose. 20

I mourn for Adonis — Adonis is dead.

Weep no more in the woods, Cytherea, thy lover!
 So, well: make a place for his corse in thy bed,
 With the purples thou sleepest in, under and over;
 He's fair, though a corse, — a fair corse, like a sleeper.
 Lay him soft in the silks he had pleasure to fold

When, beside thee at night, holy dreams deep and deeper
Enclosed his young life on the couch made of gold.
Love him still, poor Adonis; cast on him together .

The ¹⁵ crowns and the flowers: since he died from the
place,

Why, let all die with him; let the blossoms go wither;
Rain myrtles and olive-buds down on his face.

Rain the myrrh down, let all that is best fall a-pining,¹⁶

Since the myrrh of his life from thy keeping is swept.
Pale he lay, thine Adonis, in purples reclining:

10 The Loves raised their voices around him and wept.
They have ¹⁷ shorn their bright curls off to cast on
Adonis;

One treads on his bow; on his arrows another;
One ¹⁸ breaks up a well-feathered quiver; and one is

Bent low at a sandal, untying the strings;
And one carries the vases of gold from the springs,
While one washes the wound, and behind them a
brother

Fans down on the body sweet air with his wings.

Cytherea herself now the Loves are lamenting.

Each torch at the door Hymenæus blew out;

20 And, the marriage-wreath dropping its leaves as repent-
ing,

No more ¹⁹ "Hymen, Hymen," is chanted about;
But the *ai, ai*, instead — "ai alas" is begun

For Adonis, and then follows "ai Hymenæus!"
The Graces are weeping for ²⁰ Cinyras' son,
Sobbing low, each to each, "His fair eyes cannot see
us!"

Their wail strikes more thrill than the sadder ²¹ Dione's.
The Fates mourn aloud for Adonis, Adonis,

Deep chanting : he hears not a word that they say ;
 He *would* hear, but Persephone has him in keeping.
 Cease moan, Cytherea ! leave pomps for to-day,
 And ²² weep new, when a new year refits thee for
 weeping.



NOTES.

THE AUTHOR.

Of the life of Bion we know nothing save that which we gather from the Elegy which was written in his honor by his friend and pupil, Moschus (see page 43). There is, it is true, a tradition that he was born at Phlossa, on the river Meles, near Smyrna, and to this Moschus alludes. He also tells us that Bion died of poison, and that his murderers were punished for their crime. Other expressions in his poem lead us to suppose that Theocritus was still living at the time of Bion's death, which, in such case could hardly have been later than 260 B.C.

THE POEM.

It is the first of the six Idyls usually ascribed to Bion, and was probably intended to be sung at one of the spring celebrations of the festival of Adonis. Theocritus, in his fifteenth Idyl, gives us another example of the songs used on these occasions.

1. **Adonis.** The myth of Venus and Adonis probably originated in the poetic idea of the union of the Sun and the Earth, as narrated in the introductory paragraph (page 20, above). Adonis was the son of Myrrha. Even when an infant, his beauty was so wonderful that Aphrodite (Venus) conceived a passion for him, and, unknown to all the gods, she put him into a coffer, and gave him to Persephone to keep. But the queen of the shadow-land refused to give him back. The matter was referred to Zeus, and he decreed that during one-third of each year the boy should stay with Aphrodite, during another third he should be given to Persephone, and during the remaining third he should be his own master. Adonis, however, chose to remain with Aphrodite for eight months at a time — and this he continued to do until one day, when engaged in the chase, he was attacked and slain by a furious wild boar. The goddess, when she found him dead in the forest, was overwhelmed with grief: —

"She looks upon his lips, and they are pale;
 She takes him by the hand, and that is cold;
 She whispers in his ears a heavy tale,
 As if they heard the woeful words she told."

Shakespeare, Venus and Adonis.

The Adonis of the Norse mythology is called Balder, and he is the type of the good, the true, and the beautiful. In a more material sense he is also the sun, the revivifying, life-giving sunlight. Through the treachery of the evil one, he is slain by blind Hoder, who shoots him with a sprig of mistletoe. Forthwith the world is draped in mourning for the death of Balder the good; the birds stop singing, and fly to the far-away South-land; the beasts hide themselves in their lairs; the trees shiver, and sigh, and drop their withered leaves upon the ground; all Nature weeps. Then Friga, Balder's mother, sends a messenger to Hela, the goddess of the dead, to pray for the return of the bright one to those who love him. And the Death-queen consents on condition that everything on earth shall weep for him. But Thok, a giantess, refuses to join in the universal mourning, and so Hela keeps the hero in her halls. Yet during the half of each year he is permitted to visit the earth and to gladden all living beings with his smile.

The worship of Adonis dates from a very early period, and originated probably in Assyria. In Phœnicia, in the ancient city of Byblos, a festival of two days was held every year in his honor. The first day was observed as a day of mourning for the unhappy death of Adonis, or Tammuz, as he was known by the Phœnicians; the second was a day of triumph and rejoicing because of his return to the earth. The principal participants in these festivals were the young women. The prophet Ezekiel alludes to them thus:—

"And he brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat women weeping for Tammuz."—*Ezekiel* viii. 14.

Milton says of the same:—

"Thammuz came next behind,
 Whose annual wound in Lebanon allur'd
 The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
 In amorous ditties all a summer's day;
 While smooth Adonis from his native rock
 Ran purple to the sea, supposed with blood
 Of Thammuz yearly wounded."—*Par. Lost*, i.

The "smooth Adonis," thus referred to is the river Adonis, which takes its rise in the Lebanon mountains, and during the spring freshets turns

red from the red soil of the hills through which it flows. Izaak Walton has probably this river in mind when he says, "There is a river in Arabia of which all the sheep that drink thereof have their wool turned into a vermilion color."

After the introduction of the worship of Adonis among the Greeks, festivals in his honor were held in various places, and especially at Alexandria, generally continuing eight days. Theocritus, in his *Adoniazuse* (*Idyl* xv. alluded to above), describes a visit to one of these festivals—doubtless on a day of rejoicing—and allows us to listen to the song of one of the maidens chanting the praise of Adonis:—

"Him will we, ere the dew of dawn is o'er,
Bear to the waves that foam upon the shore;
Then with bare bosoms and dishevell'd hair,
Begin to chant the wild and mournful air.
Of all the demigods, they say, but one
Duly revisits earth and Acheron—
Thou, dear Adonis!"

2. Sleep no more.

"Methought I heard a voice cry, 'Sleep no more!'"

Shakespeare, Macbeth, ii. 2.

Compare with *Adonais*, iii. 2.

3. **Cytherea.** Cythera was the name of a mountainous island off the southwest coast of Laconia. This island was colonized in very ancient times by the Phœnicians who here introduced the worship of Aphrodite. Certain traditions relate that it was near the shore of Cythera that Aphrodite first rose from the foam of the sea; and the island was for a long time celebrated as one of her favored places of worship. See note 10, page 16.

4. **Oread Nymphs.** The Oreades, or Nymphs of the mountains and grottoes. See *Pastorall Æglogue upon the Death of Sir Philip Sidney*, l. 62.

5. **Assyrian.** According to Panyasis, Adonis was the son of Theias, king of Assyria, and hence an Assyrian. Compare this passage with *Adonais*, xiv. 3-6.

6. **rivers sorrow.** See *Lament for Bion*, line 2; also note 21, page 48.

7. **Who would not have lamented**, etc. Compare with *Lycidas*, 10. Also with Pope's *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*, line 214:—

"Who would not weep if Atticus were he?"

8. **Acheron, and its gloomy, cruel king.** By the figure of Synecdoche, Acheron is here used to denote the entire region of Hades. See

note 24, page 17. The cruel king is Pluto, or Aidoneus, *i.e.* death, the "king of terrors." See *Job* xviii. 14: "His confidence shall be rooted out of his tabernacle, and it shall bring him to the king of terrors."

9. **Persephone.** Queen of Hades, to whose share "falls the whole of what is beautiful." "Thou art thyself far more powerful than I." Love is sometimes represented as being strong as Death, but not so here: —

"Love, strong as death, the poet led
To the pale nations of the dead."

Pope's Ode on St. Cecilia's Day.

"Love is strong as death." — *Song of Solomon*, viii. 6.

10. **my longing is fled as a dream.** See *Job* xx. 8: "He shall flee away as a dream, and shall not be found; yea, he shall be chased away as a vision of the night."

11. **charmed girdle.** Venus's girdle was said to have the magical power of exciting love.

"It gave the virtue of chaste love
And wifehood true to all that it did bear;
But whosoever contrary doth prove
Might not the same about her middle wear,
But it would loose, or else asunder tear."

Spenser, Faerie Queene, canto iii.

Homer describes it as being —

"wrought with every charm
To win the heart; there Love, there young Desire,
There fond Discourse, and there Persuasion dwelt,
Which oft enthralls the mind of wisest men."

Iliad, xiv. (*Lord Derby's trans.*).

12. **wast thou mad enough?** etc. Compare with Shakespeare, *Venus and Adonis*, line 615: —

"Thou knowest not what it is
With javelin's point a churlish swine to gore."

13. **Paphian goddess.** From Paphos, a city in Cyprus, the chief seat of the worship of Venus.

14. **The blood begets a rose, and the tears the anemone.** See Spenser's *Astrophel*, line 181: —

"The gods . . . pitying this paire of lovers trew,
Transformed them there lying on the field
Into one flowre that is both red and blew."

See also Moschus's *Lament for Bion*: "Redden, ye roses, in your sorrow, and now wax red, ye wind-flowers." And Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*, lines 1167-1171:—

"And in his blood that on the ground lay spill'd,
A purple flower sprung up, chequer'd with white,
Resembling well his pale cheeks and the blood
Which in round drops upon their whiteness stood."

The *red maithes* or *pheasant's eye*, sometimes called Adonis flower, and in French *goute de sang*, is said to have sprung from the blood of Adonis.

15. Lay him amid chaplets and flowers. See *Lycidas*, lines 139-152. Also Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, iv. 2:—

"With fairest flowers
Whilst summer lasts, and I live here, Fidele,
I'll sweeten thy sad grave; thou shalt not lack
The flower, that's like thy face, pale primrose; nor
The azur'd hare-bell, like thy veins; no, nor
The leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander,
Out-sweeten'd not thy breath."

See also Spenser's *Shepheards Calender*, April:—

"Bring hether the pincke and purple cullambine,
With gelliflowres;
Bring coronations, and sops in wine,
Worne of paramoures:
Strowe me the ground with daffadowndillies,
And cowslips, and kingcups, and loved lillies:
The prety pawnce
And the chevisaunce,
Shall match with the fayre flowre Delice."

Also Milton's *Comus*, 998-1002:—

"Beds of hyacinth and roses,
Where young Adonis oft reposes,
Waxing well of his deep wound
In slumber soft, and on the ground
Sadly sits the Assyrian queen."

Also Shakespeare, *The Winter's Tale*, iv. 3:—

"O, Proserpina,
For the flowers now, that, frighted, thou let'st fall
From Dis's wagon! daffodils,
That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty; violets, dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes,

Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
Most incident to maids; bold oxlips, and
The crown-imperial; lilies of all kinds,
The flower-de-luce being one!"

It was said that Adonis delighted in gardens. Pliny remarks that among the ancients there were none more wonderful than those of the Hesperides, of Adonis, and of Alcinous. Shakespeare, in 1. *Henry IV.*, says:—

"Thy promises are like Adonis' gardens,
That one day bloom'd and fruitful were the next."

Spenser, in *The Faerie Queene*, iii. 6, gives a detailed and beautiful allegorical description of the gardens of Adonis:—

"Whether in Paphos, or Cytheron hill,
Or it in Gnidus bee, I wote not well;
But well I wote by triall, that this same
All other pleasant places doth excell,
And called is by her lost lover's name,
The Gardin of Adonis, far renowned by fame."

The boxes and pots of flowers used at the festivals of Adonis were also called "Adonis gardens." They were reared specially for the occasion, and after the feast they were thrown away. Hence the expression "Adonis garden" is sometimes used to designate any short-lived pleasure.

16. All flowers have become withered. Ben Jonson, in *The Sad Shepherd*, represents the flowers dying of grief for the loss of a loved one:—

"A spring, now she is dead! of what? of thorns,
Briars, and brambles? thistles, burs and docks?
Cold hemlock, yew? the mandrake or the boc?
These may grow still; but what can spring beside?
Did not the whole earth sicken when she died?
As if there since did fall one drop of dew,
But what was wept for her! or any stalk
Did bear a flower, or any branch a bloom,
After her wreath was made! . . . Do I not know
How the vale wither'd the same day?"

See also *Lament for Bion*, line 16, page 40. Spenser says:—

"The mantled medowes mourne
Theyr sundrie colors tourne."

Shepherds Calender, November.

And Pope: —

"Ye weeping Loves, the stream with myrtles hide,
And break your bows, as when Adonis died." — *Pastoral* iv.

And Burns: —

"Mourn, little harebells o'er the lee!
Ye stately foxgloves fair to see!
Ye woodbines, hanging bonnilie,
In scented bowers!
Ye roses on your thorny tree,
The first o' flowers!" — *Elegy on Matthew Henderson*.

17. **Locks shorn for Adonis.** An allusion to an ancient custom of shearing the hair in token of mourning for the dead: —

"In the midst Patroclus came,
Borne by his comrades; all the corpse with hair
They cover'd o'er, which from their heads they shore. . . .
Then a fresh thought Achilles' mind conceiv'd:
Standing apart, the yellow locks he shore,
Which as an off'ring to Sperchius' stream,
He nurs'd in rich profusion." — *Iliad*, xxxiii. 135-140.

"I do not blame
This sorrow for whoever meets his fate
And dies; the only honors we can pay
To those unhappy mortals is to shred
Our locks away, and wet our cheeks with tears."

Odyssey, iv. 197-201.

"So he (Socrates) dropped his hand and stroked my head, and pressed my hair which lay upon my neck — he often used to play with my hair — and said, 'Phædo, I suppose you intend to cut off those beautiful locks to-morrow, as a sign of mourning.'" — *Plato, Phædo*, 86.

"And they shall make themselves utterly bald for thee, and gird them with sackcloth, and they shall weep for thee with bitterness of heart and bitter wailing." — *Ezekiel*, xxvii. 31.

See *Adonais*, xi. 3.

18. **breaking his well-feather'd quiver.** See quotation from Pope, note 16, above. Also *Adonais*, xi. 6.

19. **Hymen.** The bridal song: —

"They led
The brides with flaming torches from their bowers,
Along the streets, with many a nuptial song." — *Iliad*, xviii. 493.

"And heavenly quires the Hymenean sung." — *Paradise Lost*, iv.

"Hymen, O Hymenæus, rejoice thou in this bridal."

Theocritus, Id. xviii.

"And Hymen also crowne with wreaths of vine,
And let the Graces daunce unto the rest,
For they can doo it best:
The whiles the maydens doe theyr carroll sing,
To which the woods shall answer, and theyr eccho ring."

Spenser, Epithalamion, 256-260.

"Hymen, O Hymen, to thy triumphs run,
And view the mighty spoils thou hast in battle won."

Dryden, Epithalium of Helen and Menelaus.

20. Cinyras. King of Cyprus, priest of the Paphian Venus, and, according to some, the father of Adonis.

21. Dione. The mother of Aphrodite. But the word here probably alludes to Aphrodite herself.

22. Thou must wail again. There will be another festival to Adonis next year, when this wailing and weeping will be repeated.

"Be propitious now, dear Adonis, and mayest thou give pleasure next year."
— *Theocritus*, Id. xv.

THE LAMENT FOR BION

AN IDYL BY HIS FRIEND AND PUPIL

MOSCHUS OF SYRACUSE

WRITTEN IN GREEK ABOUT 260 B.C.

An English Prose Version by Andrew Lang

"If any man sing that hath a loveless heart, him do the Muses flee, and do not choose to teach him. But if the mind of any be swayed by Love, and sweetly he sings, to him the Muses all run eagerly." So wrote Bion, the Smyrnæan, the sweet singer of many pastoral idyls and of love-ditties not a few. "And a witness am I," continued he, "that this saying is wholly true, for if I sing of any other, mortal or immortal, then falters my tongue, and sings no longer as of old; but if again to Love and Lycidas I sing, then gladly from my lips flows forth the voice of song." And afterwards he added, "I know not how nor is it fitting I should labor at what I have not learned. If my ditties are beautiful, then these only which the Muse has presented to me aforesaid will give me renown. But if these be not to men's taste, what boots it me to labor at more?" And so he sang of Adonis, slain in his beauty on the wooded mountain-top, of the wild grief of Cytherea, and the sad lament of the Loves. He sang too of Scyra, and of Achilles, and his love for Deidamia; and of the seasons, "which is sweetest, spring, or winter, or the late autumn, or the summer"; and of the boy, who, with his bow and arrows, lay in wait for Love. Then he taught to others his store of pastoral song; he taught "how the cross-flute was invented by Pan, and the flute by Athene, and by Hermes the tortoise-shell lyre, and the harp by sweet Apollo." And were these songs pleasing to men? Let the memory of them which has been kept green for now more than two thousand years answer. Let the song with which Moschus, his friend and pupil, lamented his untimely death, answer.

The Lament for Bion.



Wail, let me hear you wail, ye woodland glades, and
¹thou Dorian water; and weep ye rivers, for Bion,
the well-beloved! Now all ye green things mourn,
and now ye groves lament him, ye flowers now in sad
clusters breathe yourselves away. Now redden ye roses
in your sorrow, and now wax red ye wind-flowers, now
thou ²hyacinth, whisper the letters on thee graven, and
add a deeper *ai ai* to thy petals; he is dead, the beautiful singer.

Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.

10

³Ye nightingales that lament among the thick leaves
of the trees, tell ye to the Sicilian waters of ⁴Arethusa
the tidings that Bion the herdsman is dead, and that
with Bion song too has died, and perished hath the
⁵Dorian minstrelsy.

Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.

Ye ⁶Strymonian swans, sadly wail ye by the waters,
and chant with melancholy notes the dolorous song,
even such a song as in his time with voice like yours he
was wont to sing. And tell again to the ⁷Ægrian ²⁰
maidens, tell to all the Nymphs Bistonian, how that he
hath perished, the ⁸Dorian Orpheus.

Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.

No more to his herds he sings, that beloved herdsman, no more 'neath the lonely oaks he sits and sings, nay, but by Pluteus's side he chants ⁹ a refrain of oblivion. The ¹⁰ mountains too are voiceless: and the heifers that wander with the herds lament and refuse their pasture.

Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.

Thy sudden doom, O Bion, Apollo himself lamented,
10 and the Satyrs mourned thee, and the ¹¹ Priapi in sable raiment, and the Panes sorrow for thy song, and the fountain fairies in the wood made moan, and ¹² their tears turned to rivers of waters. And Echo in the rocks laments that thou art silent, and no more she mimics thy voice. And in sorrow for thy fall the trees cast down their fruit, and ¹³ all the flowers have faded. From the ewes hath flowed no fair milk, no honey from the hives, nay, it hath perished for mere sorrow in the wax, for now hath thy honey perished, and no more it be-
20 hooves men to gather the honey of the bees.

Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.

Not so much did the ¹⁴ dolphin mourn beside the sea-banks, nor ever sang so sweet the nightingale on the cliffs, nor so much lamented the swallow on the long ranges of the hills, nor shrilled so loud the ¹⁵ halcyon o'er his sorrows.

Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.

Nor so much, by the gray sea-waves, did ever the sea-bird sing, nor so much in the dells of dawn did the ¹⁶ birds

of Memnon bewail the son of the Morning, fluttering around his tomb, as they lamented for Bion dead.

Nightingales, and all the swallows that once he was wont to delight, that he would teach to speak, they sat over against each other ¹⁷ on the boughs and kept moaning, and the birds sang in answer, "Wail, ye wretched ones, even ye!"

Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.

Who, ah, who will ever make music on thy pipe, O thrice desired Bion, and who will put his mouth to the reeds of thine instrument? who is so bold? 10

For still thy lips and still thy breath survive, and Echo, among the reeds, doth still feed upon thy songs. To Pan shall I bear the pipe? Nay, perchance even he would fear to set his mouth to it, lest, after thee, he should win ¹⁸ but the second prize.

Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.

Yea, and ¹⁹ Galatæa laments thy song, she whom once thou wouldst delight, as with thee she sat by the seabanks. For not like the Cyclops didst thou sing — him 20 fair Galatæa ever fled, but on thee she still looked more kindly than on the salt water. And now hath she forgotten the wave, and sits on the lonely sands, but still she keeps thy kine.

Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.

All the gifts of the Muses, herdsman, have died with thee, the delightful kisses of maidens, the lips of boys; and woful round thy tomb the Loves are weeping. But Cypris loves thee far more than the kiss wherewith she kissed the dying ²⁰ Adonis.

Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.

This, O most musical of rivers, is thy second sorrow, this, ²¹ Meles, thy new woe. Of old didst thou lose Homer, that sweet mouth of Calliope, and men say thou didst bewail thy goodly son with streams of many tears, and didst fill all the salt sea with the voice of thy lamentation — now again another son thou weapest, and in a new sorrow art thou wasting away.

Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.

10 Both were beloved of the fountains, and one ever drank of the ²² Pegasean fount, but the other would drain a draught of Arethusa. And the one sang the ²³ fair daughter of Tyndarus, and the mighty son of Thetis, and Menelaus, Atreus's son, but that other, — not of wars, not of tears, but of Pan would he sing, and of herdsmen would he chant, and so singing, he tended the herds. And pipes he would fashion, and would milk the sweet heifer, and taught lads how to kiss, and Love he cherished in his bosom and woke the passion of
20 Aphrodite. •

Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.

Every famous city laments thee, Bion, and every town. ²⁴ Asdra laments thee far more than her Hesiod, and Pindar is less regretted by the forests of Bœotia. Nor so much did pleasant Lesbos mourn for Alcæus, nor did the Teian town so greatly bewail her poet, while for thee more than for Archilochus doth Paros yearn, and not for Sappho, but still for thee doth Mytilene wail her musical lament.

[Here seven verses are lost.]

And in Syracuse ²⁵ Theocritus ; but I sing thee the dirge of an ²⁶ Ausonian sorrow, I that am no stranger to the pastoral song, but heir of the Doric Muse which thou didst teach thy pupils. This was thy gift to me ; to others didst thou leave thy wealth, ²⁷ to me thy minstrelsy.

Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.

Ah me, when the mallows wither in the garden, and the green parsley, and the curled tendrils of the anise, on a later day they live again, and spring in another ¹⁰ year ; but we men, we the great and mighty, or wise, when once we have died, in hollow earth we sleep, gone down into silence ; a right long, and endless, and ²⁸ unawakening sleep. And thou, too, in the earth wilt be lapped in silence, but the nymphs have thought good that the frog should eternally sing. Nay, him I would not envy, for 'tis no sweet song he singeth.

Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.

²⁹ Poison came, Bion, to thy mouth, thou didst know poison. To such lips as thine did it come, and was not ²⁰ sweetened ? What mortal was so cruel that could mix poison for thee, or who could give thee venom that heard thy voice ? surely he had ³⁰ no music in his soul.

Begin, ye Sicilian Muses, begin the dirge.

But justice hath overtaken them all. Still for this sorrow I weep, and bewail thy ruin. But ah, if I might have gone down ³¹ like Orpheus to Tartarus, or as once Odysseus, or Alcides of yore, I too would speedily have come to the house of Pluteus, that thee perchance I might behold, and if thou singest to Pluteus, that I ³⁰

might hear what is thy song. Nay, sing to ³² the Maiden some strain of Sicily, sing some sweet pastoral lay.

And she too is Sicilian, and on the shores by Etna she was wont to play, and she knew the Dorian strain. Not unrewarded will the singing be; and as once to Orpheus's sweet minstrelsy she ³³ gave Eurydice to return with him, even so will she send thee too, Bion, to the hills. But if I, even I, and my piping had aught availed, before Pluteus I too would have sung.



NOTES.

THE AUTHOR.

"The poet Moschus seems to have found no kindred spirit to embalm his memory in harmonious numbers; or if he had that fortune, it has not survived the oblivion which so remorselessly overwhelms the rest of his personal history. We reckon him a Syracusan, whose day was about the close of the third century before Christ. And he must have been contemporaneous with Bion, probably in age somewhat younger."—*Rev. J. Banks.*

THE POEM.

The *Lament for Bion* is the third of nine Idyls (some of them very brief) which constitute all that we have left of the poetical works of Moschus.

1. *thou Dorian water; and weep, ye rivers.* See note 68, on *Lycidas*; also notes 12 and 21, below.—*all ye green things mourn.* See note 16, page 34.

2. *hyacinth.* Hyacinthus was accidentally killed by his friend Apollo while playing at quoits. From his blood sprang the flower hyacinth, upon whose leaves appear to be embroidered the Greek exclamation of woe, *ἀι, δι:*—

"The hyacinth bewrays the doleful *ai*,
And culls the tribute of Apollo's sigh.
Still on its bloom the mournful flower retains
The lovely blue that dyed the stripling's veins."

Camoëns, Lusiad, ix.

"I am pretty well satisfied that the flower celebrated by the poets is what we now are acquainted with under the name 'Lilium floribus reflexis,' or Martagon, and perhaps may be that very species which we call Imperial Martagon. The flowers of most sorts of martagons have many spots of a deeper color; and sometimes I have seen these spots run together in such a manner as to form the letters *ai* in several places." — *John Martyn*, 1755 (quoted by Rossetti).

See also *Lycidas*, line 105, and *Adonais*, xvi. 1.

3. Ye nightingales that lament: —

"So Philomel, perched on an aspen sprig,
Weeps all the night her lost virginity,
And sings her sad tale to the merry twig
That dances at such joyful misery."

Giles Fletcher, Christ's Triumph, etc.

"And Philomele her song with teares doth steep."

Spenser, The Shepheards Calender, November.

4. **Arethusa.** See note 15, page 17. See also *Lycidas*, 85 and 132. Milton calls Arethusa the "Sicilian Muse," and Virgil calls Sicily, the land of pastoral song, by her name.

5. **Dorian minstrelsy.** Pastoral songs. Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus all wrote in the Doric dialect. "Everything Doric was noted for its chaste simplicity." — *Brewer*. The Dorians were the pastoral people of Greece, and their speech was that of the simple country folk. See *Lycidas*, 189.

"The Doric reed once more

Well pleased I tuned." — *Thomson, Autumn.*

6. **Strymonian swans.** Virgil, *Georgics*, I., refers to Strymonian cranes. The river Strymon was the boundary between Macedonia and Thrace. It is related that the song of the musical swan (*Cygnus musicus*) resembles notes played on the violin. It was once a popular belief that swans sang when about to die.

"The comparison seemeth to be strange; for the swan hath ever wonne small commendation for her sweete singing. But it is said of the learned that the Swanne, a little before her death, singeth most pleasantly, as prophecyng by a secrete instinct her neere destinie." — *Shepheards Calender, October, Glosse.*

"Swans, you know, are said to sing most sweetly when they know that they are going to die; they rejoyce that they are to go to the deity whose servant they are." — *Plato, Phædo, 77.*

"I will play the swan, and die in music." — *Shakespeare, Othello, v. 2.*

"Makes a swan-like end,

Fading in Music." — *Merchant of Venice, iii. 2.*

"There, swan-like, let me sing and die." — *Byron, Don Juan, iii. 86.*

7. **Æagrian maidens.** The sisters of Orpheus. Their father was Æagrus, king of Thrace.—**Bistonian nymphs.** Nymphs of Lake Bistonis, in Thrace, near the home of Orpheus.

8. **Dorian Orpheus.** So called because of his Doric minstrelsy. John Gay (1688–1732) is sometimes referred to as the “Orpheus of Highwaymen,” from his authorship of *The Beggar’s Opera*. The Irish poet and musician, Furlough O’Carolan (1670–1738), is called the “Orpheus of the Green Isle.” See also note 28, on *Lycidas*.

9. **a refrain of oblivion.** That is, a song of forgetfulness. See *Theocritus*, Id. i.: “Thou canst in no wise carry thy song with thee to Hades, that puts all things out of mind.” Also *Iliad*, ii. 600: “They took from him the high gift of song, and made him forget his harping.”

10. **mountains.** See *Lycidas*, 161, and note on the same. Compare with Gray’s *The Bard*:—

“Mountains, ye mourn in vain
Modred, whose magic song
Made huge Plinlimmon bow his cloud-topped head.”

11. **Priapi.** See note 9, page 16.—**Panes.** “Like many other gods who were originally single, Pan was multiplied in course of time, and we meet with Pans in the plural.”—*Keightley*.—**fountain fairies made moan.** Compare with Spenser:—

“The water nymphs, that wont with her to sing and daunce,
Now balefull boughes of cypres doen advaunce.”

The Shepherds Calender, November.

12. **their tears turned to rivers of waters.** See note 1, above. Also see Bion’s *Lament for Adonis*, line 13, page 22.

“The floods doe gaspe, for dried is their sourse,
And floods of teares flow in theyr stead perforce.”

Spenser, Shepherds Calender, November.

13. **all the flowers have faded.** See note 16, page 34.

14. **dolphin.** Dolphins were lovers of music. When Arion, having won the prize in a musical contest in Sicily, was returning on ship-board to Greece, the sailors plotted to murder him in order to secure his treasures. Learning of their designs, he placed himself in the prow of the ship, and began to play on the cithæra. Many song-loving dolphins came about the vessel, and the musician, invoking the gods, threw himself into the sea in their midst. Then one of them took the bard on his back, and carried him in safety to Tænarus. See *Lycidas*, 164.

15. **halcyon.** Alcyone was the daughter of Æolus, and the wife of Ceyx. Her husband having perished in a shipwreck, she threw herself

into the sea, and the gods in compassion changed the two into birds called halcyons (kingfishers).

16. birds of Memnon. Memnon, the son of the Morning (Aurora), was slain by Achilles at Troy, and his mother besought Zeus that his memory should have more than mortal honors. Therefore from his funeral pyre two flocks of birds arose, which, after circling about the flames for a little while, began to fight among themselves; and this strange contest continued until the greater number of them perished in the fire. Every year thereafter these birds, called Memnonides, returned to the tomb of Memnon, and renewed the fight.

17. on the boughs. Compare with Spenser, *Shepherds Calender*:—

"The turtle on the bared braunch
Laments the wound that Death did launch."

18. but the second prize. See introductory paragraph, page 8.

19. Galatea. See *Theocritus*, Idyl xi., "The Cyclops in Love." Galatea was a sea-nymph. For Cyclops, see *Odyssey*, ix.

20. See *The Lament for Adonis*, page 22, line 7.

21. Meles. A river flowing near Smyrna, and past Phlossa, the birthplace of Bion. Homer also was said by some to have been reared on the banks of the same river. Calliope was the Muse of epic poetry; hence the expression, "that sweet mouth of Calliope."

22. Pegasean fount. Hippocrene, the "Fountain of the Horse," a fountain in Mount Helicon in Bœotia, sacred to the Muses:—

"Oh for a beaker full of the warm South,
Full of the true, the blushful Hippocrene."

Keats, Ode to a Nightingale.

draught of Arethusa. The fountain Arethusa, in Sicily. See note 4, above. "The one sang in Greece, the other in Sicily."

23. fair daughter of Tyndarus. Helen.—**son of Thetis.** Achilles. Homer sang of love and war, but Bion of pastoral life.

24. Ascra, in Bœotia, the birthplace of Hesiod. Pindar was born in the territory of Thebes, either at Thebes or Cynocephalæ. Alcæus was a native of Lesbos; Anacreon, of Teos, an Ionian city in Asia Minor; Archilochus, of Paros; and Sappho, of Mytilene.

25. Theocritus. Some have supposed from this passage that Theocritus was still alive, and lamented the death of Bion.

26. Ausonian sorrow. That part of the Mediterranean adjoining Sicily was called the Ausonian Sea, from Auson, the son of Odysseus. Hence Moschus, the Sicilian, calls his sorrow Ausonian or Sicilian.

27. to me thy minstrelsy. It is from this stanza that we are led to infer that Moschus was the pupil of Bion.

28. unawakening sleep : —

" Whence is it that the flowret of the field doth fade,
 And lyeth buried long in Winters bale ?
 Yet, soon as Spring his mantle hath displayde,
 It flowreth fresh, as it should never fayle ?
 But thing on earth that is of most availe,
 As vertues branch and beauties bud,
 Reliven not for any goode."

Spenser, Shepheards Calender, November.

" For there is hope of a tree, if it be cut down, that the tender branch thereof will not die. Though the root thereof wax old in the earth, and the stock thereof die in the ground, yet through the scent of water it will bud, and bring forth boughs like a plant. But man dieth, and wasteth away. . . . Man lieth down, and riseth not; till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep." — *Job* xiv. 7-12.

29. **poison.** This is all that we know about the manner of Bion's death. Compare with *Adonais*, xxxvi.

30. **no music in his soul.** See *Merchant of Venice*, Act v., Sc. 1 : —

" The man that hath no music in himself," etc.

31. **like Orpheus to Tartarus.** Orpheus descended into Hades (not Tartarus) that he might restore to life his wife Eurydice. See Virgil's *Georgics*, iv. See also Pope's *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*. Odysseus visited "the dwelling of Hades and of dread Persephone to seek the spirit of Theban Teiresias, the blind soothsayer, whose wits abide steadfast." See *Odyssey*, x. 488. Alcides (Herakles) visited the under-world in the performance of a task assigned to him by Eurystheus, namely, "to bring from Erebus the loathed hound, Cerberus." See *Iliad*, viii. 367.

32. **the Maiden.** Persephone, the daughter of Demeter. While gathering flowers on the Nysian plain, near Etna, in Sicily, she was seized by Aidoneus (Pluteus), and borne in his chariot to his gloomy halls in the under-world, there to become his queen.¹

33. " He sung, and hell consented
 To hear the poet's prayer;
 Stern Proserpine relented,
 And gave him back the fair."

Pope, Ode on St. Cecilia's Day.

" And now retracing his way, he had overpassed all dangers; and Eurydice was just approaching the regions above, following him; for Proserpina had given him that law. . . . He stopped, and unmindful and not master of himself, looked back on his Eurydice." — *Virgil, Georgics*, iv.

TWO ELEGIES
ON THE
DEATH OF SIR PHILIP SIDNEY

ASTROPHEL

By Edmund Spenser

A PASTORALL ÆGLOGUE

By L. B.

WRITTEN ABOUT 1587

Sir Philip Sidney having gone over into the Low-Countries to aid his Uncle, Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, in defending the united Provinces against the Spanish cruelties, he was given command of the cautionary Town of Flushing; a Trust which he so faithfully discharged that he turned the Envy of the Dutch Townsmen into Affection and Admiration. Not long after some service was to be performed nigh Zutphen in Gelderland, where the English through false intelligence were mistaken in the strength of the Enemy. Sir Philip is employed next to the Chief in that Expedition; which he so discharged that it is questionable whether his Wisdom, Industry, or Valour may challenge to it self the greatest praise of the Action. And now as the triumphant Laurel was ready to be wreathed about his brows, the English so near the Victory that they touched it, ready to lay hold upon it, an unlucky Bullet shot him thorow the thigh, so that the pain thereof put him into a Fever and blasted the expectations of Christendom in his sudden and unexpected death. . . . So general was the lamentation at his Funerals, that a face thereat might sooner be found without Eyes than without Tears. It was accounted a sin for any Gentleman of Quality, for many months after, to appear at Court or City in any light or gaudy Apparel; and, though a private Subject, such solemnities were performed at his Interment for the quality and multitude of Mourners, that few Princes in Christendom have exceeded, if any excelled, the sad Magnificence thereof. . . . Nor indeed were the Muses dumb at this time of universall Sorrow; but many Poets essayed to render in Verse due homage to his Memory. Edmund Spenser, who afterwards did indite The Faerie Queene, collected six of these Poems into a volume, himself writing for it the following introductory Elegie.

Astrophel.

A Pastorall Elegie upon the Death of the Most Noble and Most Valorous Knight,
SIR PHILIP SIDNEY. Dedicated to the Most Beautifull and Vertuous Ladie, the Countess
of Essex.

BY EDMUND SPENSER.

¹Shepheards, that wont, on pipes of oaten reed,
Oft times to ²plaine your loves concealéd smart;
And with your piteous layes have learned to breed
Compassion in a countrey lasses hart;
Hearken, ye gentle shepheards, to my song,
And place my dolefull plaint your plaints emong

To you alone I sing this mournfull verse,
The mournfullst verse that ever man heard tell:
To you whose softened hearts it may empierse
With dolours dart for death of Astrophel.
To you I sing and to none other ³wight,
For well I ⁴wot my rymes bene rudely dight.

Yet as they been, if any ⁵nycer wit
Shall hap to heare, or covet them to read:
Thinke he, that such are for such ones most fit,
Made not to please the living but the dead.
And if in him found ⁶pity ever place,
Let him be moov'd to pity such a case.

A gentle Shepheard borne in ⁷Arcady,
Of gentlest race that ever shepheard bore,
About the grassie bancks of ⁸Hæmony,
Did keepe his sheep, his litle ⁹stock and store.
Full carefully he kept them day and night,
In fairest fields; and Astrophel he hight.

Young Astrophel, the pride of shepherds praise,
Young Astrophel, the rusticke lasses love :
Far ¹⁰ passing all the pastors of his daies,
10 In all that seemly shepherd might behove.
In one thing onely fayling of the best,
That he was not so happie as the rest.

For from the time that first ¹¹ the Nymph, his mother,
Him forth did bring, and taught her lambs to feed ;
A sclender swaine, excelling far ¹² each other,
In comely shape, like her that did him breed,
He grew up fast in goodnesse and in grace,
And doubly faire woxe both in mynd and face.

Which daily more and more he did augment,
• 20 With gentle usage and demeanure myld :
That all mens hearts with secret ravishment
He stole away, and ¹³ weetingly beguyld.
¹⁴ Ne Spight it selfe, that all good things doth spill,
Found ought in him, that she could say was ill.

His sports were faire, his ioyance innocent,
Sweet without soure, and ¹⁵ honny without gall :
And he himselfe seemd made for meriment,
Merily masking both in bowre and hall.
There was no pleasure nor delightfull play,
30 When Astrophel so ever was away.

For ¹⁶ he could pipe, and daunce, and caroll sweet,
Emongst the shepherds in their shearing feast ;
As ¹⁷ somers larke that with her song doth greet
The dawning day forth comming from the East.
And layes of love he also could compose :
Thrise happie she, whom he to praise did chose.

Full many Maydens often did him woo,
Them to vouchsafe emongst his rimes to name,
Or make for them as he was wont to doo

¹⁸ For her that did his heart with love inflame. 40
For which they promised to dight for him
Gay chapelets of flowers and gyrlonds trim.

And ¹⁹ many a Nymph both of the wood and brooke,
Soone as his oaten pipe began to shrill,
Both christall wells and shadie groves forsooke
To heare the charmes of his enchanting skill;
And brought him presents, flowers if it were ²⁰ prime,
Or mellow fruit if it were harvest time.

But he for none of them did care a whit,
Yet ²¹ Woodgods for them often sighéd sore; 50
Ne for their gifts unworthie of his wit,
Yet not unworthie of the countries store.
For one alone he cared, for one he sigh't
His lifes desire, and his deare loves delight.

Stella the faire, the fairest star in skie,
As faire as Venus or the ²² fairest faire,
(A fairer star saw never living eie,)

Shot her sharp pointed beames through purest aire.
Her he did love, her he alone did honor,
His thoughts, his rimes, his songs were all upon her. 60

To her he vowd the service of his daies,
On her he spent the riches of his wit;
For her he made ²³ hymnes of immortall praise,
For onely her he sung, he thought, he writ.
Her, and but her, of love he worthie deemed;
For all the rest but litle he esteemed.

Ne her with ydle words alone he wowed,
And verses vaine, (yet verses are not vaine,)
But with brave deeds to her sole service vowed,
70 And bold atchievements her did entertaine.
For both in deeds and words he nourtred was,
Both wise and ²⁴ hardie, (too hardie alas!)

In wrestling nimble, and in renning swift,
In shooting steddie, and in swimming strong;
Well made to strike, to throw, to leape, to lift,
And all the sports that shepherds are emong.
In every one he vanquisht every one,
He vanquisht all, and vanquisht was of none.

Besides, in hunting such felicitie
80 Or rather infelicitie he found,
That every field and forest far away
He sought where ²⁵ salvage beasts do most abound.
No beast so salvage but he could it kill,
No chace so hard, but he therein had skill.

Such skill, matcht with such courage as he had,
Did prick him forth with proud desire of praise
To seek abroad, of daunger nought ²⁶ y' drad,
His mistresse name, and his own fame, to raise.
What needeth perill to be sought abroad,
90 Since round about us it ²⁷ doth make abroad?

It fortun'd, as he that perilous game
In ²⁸ forreine soyle pursued far away,
Into a forest wide and waste he came,
Where store he heard to be of salvage pray.
So wide a forest and so waste as this,
Nor famous ²⁹ Ardeyn, nor fowle Arlo, is.

There his welwoven toyles, and subtil traines,
He laid the ³⁰ brutish nation to enwrap;
So well he wrought with practise and with paines,
That he of them great troupes did soone entrap. 100
Full happie man (misweening much) was hee,
So rich a spoile within his power to see.

Eftsoones, all heedlesse of his dearest ³¹ hale,
Full greedily into the ³² heard he thrust,
To slaughter them, and worke their finall ³³ bale,
Least that his ³⁴ toyle should of their troupes be brust.
Wide wounds emongst them many one he made,
Now with his sharp borespear, now with his blade.

His care was all how he them all might kill,
That none might scape, (so partiall unto none :) 110
³⁵ Ill mynd so much to mynd anothers ill,
As to become unmyndfull of his owne.
But pardon that unto the cruell skies,
That from himselfe to them withdrew his eies.

So as he rag'd emongst the beastly rout,
A cruell beast of most accursed brood
Upon him turnd, (despeyre makes cowards stout,)
And, with fell tooth accustomed to blood,
³⁶ Launched his thigh with so mischievous might,
That it both bone and muscles ³⁷ ryved quight. 120

So deadly was the dint and deep the wound,
And so huge streames of blood thereout did flow,
That he endured not the direfull ³⁸ stound,
But on the cold deare earth himselfe did throw;
And ³⁹ whiles the captive heard his nets did rend,
And, having none ⁴⁰ to let, to wood did wend.

⁴¹ Ah! where were ye this while his shepherd peares,
To whom alive was nought so deare as hee ;
And ye faire Mayds, the matches of his yeares,
¹³⁰ Which in his grace did boast you most to bee ?
Ah! where were ye, when he of you had need,
To stop his wound that wondrously did bleed ?

Ah! wretched boy, the shape of ⁴² dreryhead,
And sad ensample of man's suddein end ;
Full litle faileth but thou shalt be dead,
⁴³ Unpitied, unplaynd, of foe or frend !
Whilest none is nigh, ⁴⁴ thine eylids up to close,
And kisse thy lips like faded leaves of rose.

A sort of shepherds sewing of the chace,
¹⁴⁰ As they the forest raunged on a day,
By fate or fortune came unto the place,
Where as the lucklesse boy yet bleeding lay ;
Yet bleeding lay, and yet would still have bled,
Had not good hap those shepherds thether led.

They stopt his wound, (too late to stop it was!)
And in their armes then softly did him reare :
⁴⁵ Tho (as he wild) unto his loved lasse,
His dearest love, him dolefully did beare.
The dolefulst biere that ever man did see,
¹⁵⁰ Was Astrophel, but dearest unto mee !

⁴⁶ She, when she saw her Love in such a plight,
With crudled blood and filthie gore deformed,
That wont to be with flowers and gyrlonds dight,
And her deare favours dearly well adorned ;
Her face, the fairest face that eye mote see,
She likewise did deforme like him to bee.

Her yellow locks that shone so bright and long,
As sunny beames in fairest somers day,
She fiersely tore, and with outrāgious wrong
From her red cheeks the roses rent away : 170
And her faire brest, the threasury of ioy,
She spoyld thereof, and filled with annoy.

His palled face, impictured with death,
She bathed oft with teares and dried oft :
And ⁴⁷ with sweet kisses suckt the wasting breath
Out of his lips like lillies pale and soft.
And oft she cald to him, who answered nought,
But onely by his lookes did tell his thought.

The rest of her impatient regret,
And piteous mone the which she for him made, 170
No toong can tell, nor any forth can set,
But he whose heart like sorrow did invade.
At last when paine his vitall poures had spent,
His wasted life her weary lodge ⁴⁸ forwent.

Which when she saw, she staied not a whit,
But after him did make untimely haste :
Forthwith her ghost out of her corps did flit,
And followed her make like ⁴⁹ turtle chaste :
To prove that death their hearts cannot divide,
Which living were in love so firmly tide. 180

The gods, which all things see, this same beheld,
And, pittying this paire of lovers trew,
Transformed them there lying on the field
Into one ⁵⁰ flowre that is both red and blew ;
It first grows red, and then to blew doth fade,
Like Astrophel, which thereinto was made.

And in the midst thereof a star appeares,
As fairly formd as any star in skyes :
Resembling Stella' in hēr freshest yeares,
190 Forth darting beames of beautie from her eyes :
And all the day it standeth full of deow,
Which is the teares, that from her eyes did flow.

That hearbe of some, Starlight is cald by name,
Of others Penthia, though not so well :
But thou, where ever thou doest finde the same,
From this day forth do call it Astrophel :
And, when so ever thou it up doest take,
Do pluck it softly for that shepheards sake.

Hereof when tydings far abroad did passe,
200 The shepheards all which loved him full deare,
And sure full deare of all he loved was,
Did thether flock to see what they did heare.
And when that pitteous spectacle they vewed,
The same with bitter teares they all bedewed.

And every one did make exceeding mone,
With inward anguish and great grieve opprest :
And every one did weep and waile, and mone,
And meanes deviz'd to show his sorrow best.
That from that houre, since first on grassie greene
210 Shepheards kept sheep, was not like mourning seen.

A Pastorall Aeglogue.⁵¹

LYCON. COLIN.

Lycon. Colin, well fits thy sad cheare this sad
⁵² stownd,

This wofull stownd, wherein all things complaine
 This great mishap, this greevous losse of owres.
 Hear'st thou the ⁵³ Orown? how with hollow sownd
 He slides away, and murmuring doth plaine,
 And seemes to say unto the fading flowres,
 Along his bankes, unto the bared trees: —
⁵⁴ *Phillisides is dead!* Up, iolly swaine,
 Thou that with skill canst tune a doleful lay,
 Help him to mourn. My hart with grief doth freese, ¹⁰
 Hoarse is my voice with crying, else a part
 Sure would I beare, though ⁵⁵ rude: But as I may,
 With sobs and sighes I second will thy song,
 And so expresse the sorrowes of my hart.

Colin. Ah Lycon, Lycon, what need skill to teach
 A grieved mynd powre forth his plaints! how long
 Hath the ⁵⁶ pore turtle gon to school (weenest thou)
 To learne to mourne her lost ⁵⁷ make! No, no, each
 Creature by nature can tell how to waile.
 Seest not these flocks, how sad they wander now?
 Seemeth their leaders bell their bleating tunes
 In dolefull sound. Like him, not one doth faile
 With hanging head to shew a heavie cheare.

What bird (I pray thee) hast thou seen, that ⁵⁸ prunes
 Himselfe of late? Did any cheerfull note
 Come to thine eares, or gladsome sight appeare
 Unto thine eies, since that same fatall howre?
 Hath not the aire put on his mourning coat,
 And testified his grief with flowing teares?
 30 Sith then, it seemeth each thing to his powre
 Doth us invite to make a sad consort;
 Come, let us ioyne our mournfull song with theirs.
 Griefe will endite, and sorrow will enforce
 Thy voice; and echo will our words report.

Lycon. Though my rude rymes ill with thy verses
 frame,
 That others farre excell; yet will I force
 My selfe to answer thee the best I can,
 And honor my base words with his high name.
 But if my plaints annoy thee where thou sit
 40 In secret shade or cave, vouchsafe (O ⁵⁹ Pan)
 To pardon me, and hear this ⁶⁰ hard constraint
 With patience, while I sing, and pittie it.
 And eke ye rurall Muses, that do dwell
 In these wilde woods, if ever piteous plaint
 Ye did endite, or taught a wofull minde
 With words of pure affect his griefe to tell,
 Instruct me now. Now, Colin, then go on,
 And I will follow thee, though farre behinde.

Colin sings.

Phillisides is dead. ⁶¹ O harmfull death,
 50 O deadly harme! Unhappy Albion,
 When shalt thou see, emong thy shepheardes all
 Any so sage, so perfect? Whom ⁶² uneath

Envie could touch for vertuous life and skill
 Curteous, valiant, and liberall.
 Behold the sacred ⁶³ Pales, where with haire
 Untrust she sits, in shade of yonder hill;
 And her faire face, bent sadly downe, doth send
 A floud of teares to bathe the earth; and there
 Doth call the heav'ns despightfull, envious,
 Cruell his fate, that made so short an end 60
 Of that same life, well worthie to have bene
 Prolonged with many yeares, happie and famous.
 The ⁶⁴ Nymphs and Oreades her round about
 Do sit lamenting on the grassie grene;
 And with shrill cries, beating their whitest breasts,
 Accuse the direfull dart that death sent out
 To give the fatall stroke. The starres they blame
 That deafe or carelesse seeme at their request.
 The pleasant shade of stately groves they shun;
 They leave their cristall springs, where they wont frame 70
 Sweet bowres of myrtel twigs and lawrel faire,
 To sport themselves free from the scorching sun.
 And now the hollow caves where horror darke
 Doth dwell, whence banisht is the gladsome aire,
 They seeke; and there in mourning spend their time
 With wailfull tunes, whiles ⁶⁵ wolves do howl and barke,
 And seem to beare a bourdon to their plaint.

Lycon sings.

Phillisides is dead! O dolefull ryme!
 Why should by toong expresse thee? Who is left
 Now to uphold thy hopes, when they do faint, 80
 Lycon unfortunate! What spitefull fate,
⁶⁶ What lucklesse destinie, hath thee bereft
 Of thy chief comfort — of thy onely stay!

Where is become thy wonted happie state,
 (Alas !) wherein through many a hill and dale,
 Through pleasant woods, and many an unknown way
 Along the bankes of many silver streames
 Thou with him yodest ; and with him didst scale
 The craggie rocks of th' Alpes and Appenine !
 90 Still with the Muses sporting, while those beames
 Of vertue kindled in his noble brest,
 Which after did so gloriously forth shine !
 But (woe is me !) they now yquenched are
 All suddeinly, and death hath them opprest.
 Loe ⁶⁷ father Neptune, with sad countenance,
 How he sits mourning on the strond now bare,
 Yonder, where th' Ocean with his rolling waves
 The white feete washeth (wailing this mischance)
 Of Dover cliffes. His sacred skirt about,
 100 The sea-gods all are set ; from their moist caves
 All for his comfort gathered there they be.
 The ⁶⁸ Thamis rich, the Humber rough and stout,
 The fruitfull Severne, with the rest are come
 To helpe their lord to mourne, and eke to see
 The dolefull sight, and sad pomp funerall,
 Of the dead corps passing through his kingdome.
 And all the heads, with ⁶⁹ cypres gyrlonds crown'd
 With wofull shrikes salute him great and small,
 Eke wailfull Echo, forgetting her deare
 110 Narcissus, their last accents doth resownd.

Colin sings again.

Phillisides is dead ! O lucklesse age ;
 O widow world ; ⁷⁰ O brookes and fountains cleere ;
 O hills, O dales, O woods, that oft have rong

With his sweet caroling, which could asswage
 The fiercest wrath of tygre or of beare :
 Ye Silvans, Fawnes, and ⁷¹ Satyres, that emong
 These thickets oft have daunst after his pipe ;
 Ye Nymphs and Nayades with golden heare,
 That oft have left your purest cristall springs
 To hearken to his layes, that coulden wipe
 Away all grieffe and sorrow from your harts :
 Alas ! who now is left that like him sings ?
 When shall you heare againe like harmonie ?
 So sweet a sownd who to you now imparts ?
 Loe where engraved by his hand yet lives
 The name of Stella in yonder ⁷² bay tree.
 Happie name ! happie tree ! faire may you grow,
 And spred your sacred branch, which honor gives
 To famous Emperours, and Poets crowne.
⁷³ Unhappie flock that wander scattred now,
 What marvell if through grief ye woxen leane,
 Forsake your food, and hang your heads adowne !
 For such a shepheard never shall you guide,
 Whose parting hath of weale bereft you cleane.

120

130

Lycon sings again.

Phillisides is dead ! O happie sprite,
 That now in heav'n with blessed soules doest bide :
 Looke down awhile from where thou ⁷⁴ sitst above,
 And see how busie shepheards be to endite
 Sad songs of grief, their sorrowes to declare,
 And gratefull memory of their kynd love.
 Behold my selfe with Colin, gentle swaine,
 (Whose lerned Muse thou cherisht most whyleare,)
 Where we, thy name recording, seeke to ease
 The inward torment and tormenting paine,

140

That thy departure to us both hath bred ;
 Ne can each others sorrow yet appease.
 Behold the fountains now left desolate,
 And withred grasse with cypres boughes he spred ;
 Behold these ⁷⁵ floures which on thy grave we strew ;
 150 Which, faded, shew the givers faded state,
 (Though eke they shew their fervent zeale and pure,)
 Whose onely comfort on thy welfare grew.
 Whose praiers importune shall the heav'ns for ay,
 That, to thy ashes, rest they may assure :
 That learned shepherds honor may thy name
 With yeerly praises, and the Nymphs alway
 Thy tomb may deck with fresh and sweetest flowres ;
 And that forever may endure thy fame.

Colin. ⁷⁶ The sun (lo !) hastned hath his face to steep
 160 In western waves ; and th' aire with stormy showres
 Warnes us to drive homewards our silly sheep :
 Lycon, lett's rise, and take of them good keep.

Virtute summa ; cætera fortuna.

L. B.



NOTES.

THE AUTHORS.

I. Edmund Spenser was born in London about the year 1552. In 1569 he entered Pembroke College, Cambridge, where in due course of time he received the degree of M.A. It was probably at college that he became acquainted with Sir Philip Sidney, by whom he was afterwards introduced to the queen's favorite, the Earl of Leicester. In 1579 he published his *Shepherds Calender*, which placed him at once in the front rank of English poets. In 1580, as secretary to Lord Grey de Wilton, he went to Ireland where, with the exception of two visits to England, he

remained during the rest of his life. The first three books of the *Faerie Queene* were published in 1590, and the second three in 1596. In 1598 an insurrection occurred in Ireland, and Kilcolman Castle, Spenser's residence, was burned by the rebels, he himself with his family escaping with great difficulty. Early in the following year, broken-hearted and in great distress, he died in King Street, Westminster.

"Spenser was not only a great poet himself, but in a singular degree was the cause — that is, the immediate cause — of poetry in others." — *Hales*.

"Of all poets, Spenser is the most poetical." — *Hazlitt*.

II. Ludovick Brysket, the author of the *Pastorall Aeglogue*, was Spenser's predecessor in the service of the Council of Munster, Ireland, and an intimate friend not only of the poet, but doubtless of Sir Philip Sidney also. It is from a pamphlet written by him, entitled *A Discourse of Civil Life* and published in 1606, that we have the first trustworthy account of the composition of the *Faerie Queene*. Of his poetical works we have only the two pieces included in the tribute to Sidney mentioned below.

THE INTRODUCTION.

For the Introduction I am indebted largely to Φιλοφιλίως, the biographer of Sir Philip Sidney, whose quaint sketch of the life of his friend forms the preface to the latter's *Arcadia* in the edition of 1674.

THE POEMS.

The elegy entitled *Astrophel* is Spenser's contribution to a collection of memorial poems on the death of Sir Philip Sidney, written probably in 1587, but not published until 1595. It is made to serve, in fact, as an introduction to a poetical "handfull of flowers that decked the mournfull herse of Sidney"; for, after Spenser, —

"full many other moe,
As everie one in order loved him best,
Gan dight themselves t'expresse their inward woe,
With dolefull lays unto the time address.
The which I here in order will rehearse."

This collection included *The Dolefull Lay of Clorinda*, probably by Sidney's sister Mary, the Countess of Pembroke; *The Mourning Muse of Thestylis*, and *A Pastorall Aeglogue*, by Ludovick Brysket, "a swaine of gentle wit and daintie sweet device, whom Astrophel full deare did entertaine"; *An Elegie, or Friends Passion for his Astrophel*, by Matthew

Roydon; and two short poems whose authorship is unknown. We here present the introduction, *Astrophel*, and the second of Brysket's poems, *A Pastorall Aeglogue*.

Astrophel (lover of a star). Sir Philip Sidney — a name assumed by himself, and frequently applied to him by his friends and admirers. As the name Philip Sidney is fancifully derived from *philos*, a lover, and *sidus*, a star, so *Astrophel* is derived from *astron*, a star, and *philos*. Penelope Devereux, the daughter of the Earl of Essex, for whom Sidney entertained a passion, was called *Stella*, or the Star, and to her his sonnets, entitled *Astrophel and Stella*, were addressed.

"But while as Astrofell did live and raine,
Amongst all these was none his paragone."

Spenser, Colin Clouts come Home Again, 450.

1. **Shepherds.** Courtiers, friends of Sidney. Shepherds and flocks are indispensable to pastoral poetry. — **pipes of oaten reed.** The typical musical instrument of pastoral life. Compare with *Lycidas*, 33 and 88; also with Milton's *Comus*, 345: —

"Might we but hear
The folded flocks penn'd in their wattled cotes,
Or sound of pastoral reed with oaten stops."

Also with Shakespeare, *Love's Labour's Lost*, v. 2: —

"When shepherds pipe on oaten straws."

2. **plaine.** Lament. From Lat. *plangere*, to beat the breast: —

"We with piteous heart unto you pleyne." — *Chaucer*.

See also *plaint*, below. — **loves.** The apostrophe was not used by the earlier English writers as a sign of the possessive case of nouns.

3. **wight.** Person, human being. From A.-S. *wiht*.

4. **wot.** Know. Present tense, third, singular of the old verb *wit*. From A.-S., *witan*. — **my rymes bene rudely dight.** My rhymes be roughly adorned or arranged. Compare with Skelton (1460-1529): —

"Though my rhyme be ragged,
Tattered and gagged,
Rudely rain-beaten,
Rusty, moth-eaten,
Yf ye take welle therewithe,
It hath in it some pithe."

5. *nycer*. More exacting.—*wit*. See *wight*, note 3, above; also *wot*, note 4, and note the force of both in this word.

6. *pity*. Observe the play upon the noun *pity* and the verb *to pity*, below. An example of euphuism, an affected style of expression very fashionable among the gallants of the court of Queen Elizabeth. See also the use of *plaine*, *plaint*, and *plaints* in the first stanza.

7. *Arcady*. Arcadia was the land of shepherds, of simple country life and manners, of homely enjoyment and contentment. It was, even more than Sicily, the land of pastoral song. So pastoral poetry is often called Arcadic. But it is probably in reference to Sidney's authorship of the romance entitled *Arcadia* that Spenser here speaks of him as "born in Arcady."

"Sidney, than whom a gentler, braver man,
His own delightful genius never feigned,
Illustrating the vales of Arcady
With courteous courage and with loyal loves."—*Southey*.

8. *Hæmony*. Hæmonia, a town in Arcadia, founded by Hæmus. Also the ancient name of Thessaly. See Milton's use of the word in an entirely different sense in *Comus*, 637, as a plant "of sovran use 'gainst all enchantments," etc.

9. *stock*. "In what an almost infinity of senses the word *stock* is employed. We have live *stock*; *stock-in-trade*; the village *stocks*; the *stock* of a gun; the *stock* dove; the *stocks* on which ships are built; the *stock* which goes round the neck; the family *stock*; the *stocks* or public funds in which money is invested; and other *stocks* besides these. What point in common can we find among them all? This—they are all derived from, and were originally the past participle of, *to stick*, which, as it now makes *stuck*, made formerly *stock*, and they cohere in the idea of fixedness which is common to them all. Thus the *stock* of a gun is that in which the barrel is fixed; the village *stocks* are those in which the feet are fastened; the *stock-in-trade* is the fixed capital, and so too is the *stock* on the farm, although the fixed capital has there taken the shape of horses and cattle; in the *stocks*, or public funds, money sticks fast, inasmuch as those who place it there cannot withdraw the capital, but receive only the interest; the *stock* of a tree is fast set in the ground, and from this use of the word, it is transferred to a family; the *stock* or stirps is that from which it grows, and out of which it unfolds itself."—*Trench*.—*hight*. Was called. Although active in form, this word, used in the present tense or as a preterite, is passive in meaning. From A.-S. *hatan*, to call.

10. *passing all the pastors*. Observe the euphuism.—*pastors*. Shepherds. From Lat. *pascere*, to pasture.

11. **the Nymph, his mother.** "His mother was Daughter to John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland. We know that a Pippin grafted on a Pippin is called a Renate, as extracted from Gentil Parentage. Gardeners have a mystery by Innoculating Roses on Roses (the original, they say of the Province) to make them grow double. I could in like manner avow the double excellency of such, who are descended of Noble Ancestors." — Φιλοφιλίππος.

12. **each other.** That is, every other swain.

13. **weetingly.** Wittingly, knowingly.

14. **Ne. Not. — spill.** Destroy, mar. From A.-S., *spillan*, to destroy. "Spill not the morning, the quintessence of the day, in recreations." — Fuller.

"To choose whether she would him save or spill."

Chaucer, *Wife of Baths Tale*.

15. "A little gall embitters a great deal of honey." — *Spanish Proverb*.

16. **he could pipe.** Compare with *Lycidas*, line 10.

17. **somers larke, etc.** Compare with Shakespeare, *Cymbeline*, ii. 3: —

"The lark at heaven's gate sings
And Phoebus gins rise."

18. **For her.** For "Stella," Penelope Devereux. See note on *Astrophel*, above, and note 46, below.

19. **many a Nymph.** Compare with *Lycidas*, 35.

20. **prime.** Spring.

"Hope waits upon the flowery prime." — Waller.

21. **Woodgods.** Referring doubtless to some of Sidney's companions or contemporaries. So the companions of *Lycidas* were fauns and satyrs. See *Lycidas*, 34.

22. **fairest faire, etc.** Euphuism again.

23. **hymnes.** The sonnets entitled *Astrophel and Stella*, in which Sidney celebrated his love for Lady Devereux. See note 46, below.

24. **hardie.** Resolute, brave. Compare with Chaucer: —

"Hap helpeth hardy man alway."

25. **salvage.** The old form of the word *savage*. From Lat. *silva*, a wood; *silvaticus*, belonging to a wood.

26. **y'drad.** Dreading, fearing.

27. **doth make aboad.** Doth dwell.

28. **forreine soyle.** Holland. See introductory note, page 50. —

forest wide. The country in the neighborhood of Flushing and Zutphen, where the battle was fought.

29. Ardeyn. Probably Ardennes, an ancient forest of great extent in the north of France. This forest is made famous in Boiardo's *Orlando Innamorato* (1495), and is probably the forest of Arden of Shakespeare's *As You Like It*:—

"*Oli.* Where will the old Duke live?

Cha. They say he is already in the Forest of Arden, and a many merry men with him; and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England."—Act i., Sc. 1.

There was also a forest of Arden in the central part of England. But the Arden of the poets, wherever it may have been (whether Arden, Ardeyn, or Ardennes), was a product of the imagination:—

"The forest-walks of Arden's fair domain,
Where Jaques fed his solitary vein,
No pencil's aid as yet had dared supply,
Seen only by the intellectual eye."—*Charles Lamb.*

As to the **fowle Arlo**, it was possibly suggested by the ancient village of Arlon in northern France almost surrounded by the forest of Ardennes.

30. brutish nation. The Spanish. Spenser here forgets his metaphors, and lapses into literal terms and expressions.

31. dearest hale. Best welfare, safety. Akin to *hale* (or *hail*), sound, healthy, whole. From O. E. *heil*.

32. heard. The poet returns to his metaphors, and the "brutish nation" becomes a "herd" of cruel beasts, a "beastly rout," etc.

33. bale. Destruction. From A.-S. *bealu*, evil.

34. toyle. Ambush, trap, nets. Now commonly used in the plural, *toils*:—

"Toils for beasts, and lime for birds were found."—*Dryden.*

troups. Crowds. — **brust.** Burst.

35. Ill mynd. Unfortunate disposition. Observe the euphuism in these lines, using *ill* as an adjective and a noun, and *mynd* as a noun, a verb, and an adjective (in *unmyndfull*).

36. Launched his thigh. See *The Lament for Adonis* (page 25, line 3). *Launch*, to pierce as with a lance, to lance.

37. ryved. Split, cleaved asunder, rifted.

38. stound. Sudden pain. Akin to *stun*, *stunned*.

39. whiles. Meanwhile. — **nets.** See note 34, above.

40. to let. To hinder, or prevent. From A.-S. *lettan*. The same word with the opposite meaning, to permit, is from A.-S. *laetan*. In its

first meaning it is now obsolete except in the legal phrase, "without let or hindrance."

41. **Ah! where were ye?** Compare with *Lycidas*, 50; with the *Sorrow of Daphnis*, line 3; and with *Adonais*, ii. 1. See note 3, page 14.

42. **dreryhead.** Sorrow, dismalness = drearihood:—

"She grew to hideous shape of dryrihed,
Pined with grief of folly late repented."—*Spenser, Muioptomos*.

43. **unpitied**, etc. Compare with Scott:—

"And, doubly dying, shall go down,
Unwept, unhonored, and unsung."
Lay of the Last Minstrel, vi. 1.

44. **thine eylids up to close.** Compare with Dryden:—

"On the bare earth expos'd he lies,
With not a friend to close his eyes."—*Alexander's Feast*.

Also with Pope, *Elegy on an unfortunate Lady*, 49:—

"No friend's complaint, no kind domestic tear
Pleas'd thy pale ghost, or grac'd thy mournful bier;
By foreign hands thy dying eyes were clos'd."

Also with Bion's *Lament for Adonis* (page 21, line 12).—**sort.** Company.—**sewing of the chace.** Following the chase. The word *sewing* is akin to the word *sue*, to woo, to follow up, to pursue.

45. **Tho.** Then.—**wild.** Willed, wished. Observe the play on the words *beare* and *biere*.

46. **She.** Referring to "his loved lasse," Stella (Lady Devereux). But the entire narrative that follows is purely fanciful. At the time of Sidney's death, "Stella" had already been married to Lord Rich, and was then a widow. She soon married a second time, becoming the wife of Charles Blount whom James I. afterwards created Earl of Devonshire.

47. **with sweet kisses**, etc. Compare with the *Lament for Adonis*, (page 22, line 28).

48. **forwent.** Departed from, went out of.—**her weary lodge.** Its "tenement of clay."

49. **turtle.** See note 56, below.

50. **flowre.** See note 14, page 33.

51. The *Pastoral Aeglogue* is the fourth in the collection of poems on the death of Sir Philip Sidney. Its poetical merits are not of a high order, but it is given here rather to show its probable connection with, and influence upon, other works of the same class. Of the two shepherds

(poets) represented as talking, Lycon is Bryskett himself. "Colin" is "Colin Clout," or Spenser. See lines 81-89.

52. **stownd.** Time, or occasion. See note 38, above, for the use of the word *stownd*, which has a very different meaning.

53. **Orown.** Probably a river or other stream of water in the neighborhood of the writer's home or near the country residence of the Sidneys.

54. **Phillisides.** Phil. Sid., Philip Sidney; *philos*, a lover; *sidus*, a star. See note on *Astrophel*, above.

55. **rude.** See note 4, on *my rymes bene rudely dight*, above.

56. **pore turtle.** The poor turtle-dove, noted for its mournful note and believed to have great affection for its mate:—

"Why then, sir, I will take a liberty to tell or rather to remember you what is said of turtle-doves,—first that they silently plight their troth and marry; and that then the survivor scorns, as the Thracian women are said to do, to outlive his or her mate, and this is taken for truth; and if the survivor shall ever couple with another, then not only the living but the dead, be it either the he or the she, is denied the name and honor of a true turtle-dove."—*Izaak Walton, Complete Angler*.

"The moan of doves in immemorial elms,"—*Tennyson, The Princess*.

"The Turtle by him never stird,
Example of immortall love."—*Matthew Roydon*.

The name *turtle* was not applied to the tortoise until about 1610, twenty years after the writing of this poem.

57. **make.** Mate. This is the original form of the word now exclusively written *mate*. From A.-S. *maca*. The word *match*, a companion, an equal, is also from the same root:—

"And of fair Britomart ensample take,
That was as true in love as turtle to her make."

The Faerie Queene, iii. 11.

58. **prunes.** Plumes. Sometimes written *preens*.

59. **Pan.** The god of flocks and herds, and hence specially regarded with love and fear by all shepherds. He is described in the Homeric hymns as "lord of all the hills and dales":—

"Universal Pan
Knit with the Graces and the Hours in dance,
Led on the eternal Spring."—*Milton, Paradise Lost*, iv. 266.

Observe Lycon's sudden change of address from his companion, Colin, to the god Pan and the rural Muses. See *The Sorrow of Daphnis*.

60. **hard constraint.** Compare with Milton's "bitter constraint," *Lycidas*, 6 (see page 79).

61. **O harmfull death, O deadly harme.** Euphuism again. — **Albion.** England. Conjecture derives the word from Gael. *alp*, a highland; from *albus*, white, with reference to the white cliffs visible from Gaul; or from *Albiones*, the ancient inhabitants of Britain.

62. **uneath.** Scarcely.

63. **Pales.** The goddess of sheepfolds and pastures, especially revered by the Romans. — **untrust.** Untrussed, disarranged. Compare this passage with Bion's reference to Aphrodite's unkempt hair, *Lament for Adonis*, page 21, bottom. Also *Astrophel*, 57, and *Adonais*, xiv. 4.

64. **Nymphs and Oreades.** See note 4, page 31.

65. **wolves.** Compare with *The Sorrow of Daphnis*, line 10, and with *The Lament for Bion*. Also see note 6, page 15.

66. **What lucklesse destinie,** etc. Compare with Milton, *Lycidas*, 92 and 107; and see note 8, page 16.

67. **father Neptune.** See *Lycidas*, 90.

68. Compare the mention of the river-gods Thamys, Humber, and Severn, with Milton's reference to Camus, *Lycidas*, 103. See also note 1, page 44, and *Lament for Bion*, line 2.

69. **cypres.** The cypress was an emblem of death, and was dedicated by the Romans to Pluto. — **echo.** Compare with *Lament for Bion*, page 40, line 13, and with *Adonais*, xv.

70. Compare these lines with the opening lines of Moschus's *Lament for Bion*.

71. **Satyres . . . daunst.** Compare with *Lycidas*, 34. — **wipe away all griefe.** Compare with *Lycidas*, 181.

72. **bay tree.** The laurel. Poets and victors in the Pythian games were crowned with wreaths of laurel. Hence, a poet laureate was originally one who had received such honor. The reference here is doubtless to Sidney's series of sonnets entitled *Astrophel and Stella*. See note 1, page 86.

73. **Unhappie flock,** etc. Compare with *Lycidas*, 125.

74. **sitst above.** Compare with *Lycidas*, 172 *et seq.*; and see note 64, page 93.

75. **flowres.** See note 15, page 33.

76. **The sun,** etc. Compare with *Lycidas*, 190–191; and see note 69, page 94.

DIRGE FOR IMOGEN

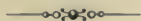
FROM THE TRAGEDY OF CYMBELINE

By William Shakespeare

WRITTEN ABOUT 1610

Overtaken by misfortune, Imogen, the daughter of Cymbeline, king of Britain, was wandering in a forest, disguised as a page. Led by chance, she came to a cave wherein dwelt old Belarius and with him her own brothers, Polydore and Cadwal, whom he had stolen from their father in their infancy. She told them that her name was Fidele, and that she had lost her way while trying to reach Milford-Haven, where a kinsman of hers was about to embark for Italy. The wild forest youths, grown now to manhood's stature, welcomed her to their rude home, and she gladly accepted their pressing invitation to stay with them until she had rested from the fatigue of her journey. The longer she remained with them, the more attached did they become to her and she to them. "How angel-like he sings," said Polydore. "But his neat cookery," said Cadwal; "he sauced our broths as though Juno had been sick, and he her dieter." Then there came a day when Belarius and the brothers must go hunting, for their stock of venison was low. But Imogen was ill and could not go out with them. No sooner was she left alone than she took from her pocket a cordial which had been given her, and which until that moment she had forgotten, and drank it off. Now the person from whom she had received the cordial did not know its nature, else he would not have given it to her. It caused her to fall into a sound sleep, so deathlike that to all appearances she was dead. When Belarius and the brothers returned to the cave they found her lying, as they supposed lifeless, on the ground. . . . Then they carried her to a shady nook in the forest, and with great sadness in their hearts covered her with leaves and flowers. "While summer lasts and I live here," said Polydore, "I'll sweeten thy sad grave with flowers. Thou shalt not lack the flower that's like thy face, pale primrose; nor the azur'd hare-bell, like thy veins; no, nor the leaf of eglantine, whom not to slander, out-sweeten'd not thy breath. All these will I strew o'er thee." . . . And then the brothers sang repose to the spirit of their unknown guest.

Dirge for Imogen.



Fear no more the heat o' th' sun,
Nor the furious winter's rages ;
Thou thy worldly task hast done,
Home art gone, and ta'en thy wages :
Golden lads and girls all must,
As chimney-sweepers, come to dust.

Fear no more the frown o' th' great,
Thou art past the tyrant's stroke ;
Care no more to clothe and eat ;
To thee the reed is as the oak :
The sceptre, learning, physic, must
All follow this, and come to dust.

Fear no more the lightning-flash,
Nor th' all-dreaded thunder-stone ;
Fear no slander, censure rash ;
Thou hast finish'd joy and moan :
All lovers young, all lovers must
Consign to thee, and come to dust.

No exorciser harm thee !
Nor no witchcraft charm thee !
Ghost unlaid forbear thee !
Nothing ill come near thee !
Quiet consummation have ;
And renowned be thy grave !

[A variation by William Collins, 1746.]

DIRGE IN CYMBELINE.



To fair Fidele's grassy tomb
Soft maids and village hinds shall bring
Each opening sweet of earliest bloom,
And rifle all the blooming Spring.

No wailing ghost shall dare appear,
To vex with shrieks this quiet grove,
But shepherd lads assemble here,
And melting virgins own their love.

No wither'd witch shall here be seen,
No goblins lead their nightly crew;
The female fays shall haunt the green,
And dress thy grave with pearly dew.

The red-breast oft at evening hours
Shall kindly lend his little aid,
With hoary moss and gather'd flowers,
To deck the ground where thou art laid.

When howling winds and beating rain,
In tempests shake thy sylvan cell;
Or 'midst the chase on every plain,
The tender thought on thee shall dwell.

Each lonely scene shall thee restore,
For thee the tear be duly shed;
Belov'd till life can charm no more;
And mourn'd till Pity's self be dead.

LYCIDAS

A PASTORAL ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF EDWARD KING

By John Milton

1637

Edward King was the son of Sir John King, who during the later years of Elizabeth and the reigns of the first two Stuarts was royal Secretary for Ireland. He was a young man of many accomplishments and much promise. In 1626, when only fourteen years of age, he entered Christ's College, Cambridge, where Milton, then in his third college year, was laying the foundation for his future illustrious career. King became at once a favorite among the students. He composed verses — some of which, written in Latin, are still preserved, and after graduation he was made a fellow and tutor in the college. It was the intention of himself and his friends that he should enter the Church, and his studies were all directed towards preparing him for that important and responsible position. Just at the time when the promises of his life seemed brightest, he decided upon making a visit to some of his friends in Ireland, and took passage on board a vessel at Chester for that purpose. When off the Welsh coast the ship struck upon a rock, and through the blow leaked and gaped. "While the other voyagers busied themselves in vain with mortal life," says a contemporary, "King, aspiring after the immortal, threw himself upon his knees, and as he prayed was swallowed up by the waters along with the vessel, and gave his life to God, on the 10th of August, in the year of salvation 1637, of his life twenty-five." A few months after this deplorable event a small volume of verses in honor of the young scholar was published in Cambridge. It contained thirty-six pieces (twenty-three of which were in Greek or Latin), and one of them was entitled Lycidas and signed J. M., with the date "Novemb. 1637."

Lycidas.



¹ Yet once more, O ye laurels, and once more,
Ye myrtles brown, with ivy never sere,
I come to pluck your berries harsh and crude,
And with ² forc'd fingers rude,

³ Shatter your leaves before the mellowing year.

⁴ Bitter constraint and sad occasion dear
Compels me to disturb your season due ;
For Lycidas is dead, dead ere his prime, .
Young Lycidas, and hath not left his peer :

⁵ Who would not sing for Lycidas ? he knew
Himself to sing and build the lofty rhyme.
He must not float upon his watery bier
Unwept, and welter to the parching wind
Without the meed of some ⁶ melodious tear.

10

⁷ Begin, then, Sisters of the sacred well
That from beneath the seat of Jove doth spring ;
Begin, and somewhat loudly ⁸ sweep the string.

Hence with denial vain and coy excuse :
So may some gentle ⁹ Muse

With lucky words favor my destin'd urn,
And, as he passes, turn

20

And bid fair peace be to my ¹⁰ sable shroud.

For we were nurs'd upon the self-same hill,¹¹
Fed the same flock, by fountain, shade, and rill ;

Together both, ere the ¹² high lawns appear'd
Under the opening eye-lids of the ¹³ Morn,
We ¹⁴ drove afield, and both together heard
What time the gray-fly winds ¹⁵ her sultry horn,
¹⁶ Battening our flocks with the fresh dews of night,
30 Oft till the star that rose at evening bright
Toward heaven's descent had slop'd his ¹⁷ westering
wheel.

Meanwhile the rural ditties were not mute ;
Temper'd to the ¹⁸ oaten flute,
Rough ¹⁹ Satyrs danc'd, and Fauns with cloven heel
From the glad sound would not be absent long ;
And ²⁰ old Damœtas lov'd to hear our song.

But, O the heavy change, now thou art gone,
Now thou art gone, and never must return !
Thee, shepherd, thee the ²¹ woods and desert caves
40 With wild thyme and the gadding vine o'ergrown,
And all their ²² echoes mourn :

The willows and the hazel copses green,
Shall now no more be seen
Fanning their joyous leaves to thy soft lays.
As killing as the ²³ canker to the rose,
Or ²⁴ taint-worm to the weanling herds that graze,
Or frost to flowers, that their gay wardrobe wear
When the first white-thorn blows,
Such, Lycidas, thy loss to shepherd's ear.

50 ²⁵ Where were ye, Nymphs, when the remorseless deep
Clos'd o'er the head of your lov'd Lycidas ?
For neither were ye playing on ²⁶ the steep
Where your old bards, the famous Druids, lie,
Nor on the ²⁷ shaggy top of Mona high,
Nor yet where ²⁸ Deva spreads her wizard stream :
Ay me ! I ²⁹ fondly dream !

Had ye been there — for what could that have done?
 What could the ³⁰ Muse herself that Orpheus bore,
 The Muse herself, for her enchanting son
 Whom universal Nature did lament, 60
 When, by the rout that made the hideous roar,
 His gory visage down the stream was sent,
 Down the swift Hebrus to the Lesbian shore?

Alas! what ³¹ boots it with incessant care
 To tend the homely, slighted shepherd's trade,
 And strictly meditate the thankless Muse?
 Were it not better done, as others use,
 To sport with Amaryllis in the shade,
 Or with the tangles of Neæra's hair?
 Fame is ³² the spur that the clear spirit doth raise 70
 (That last infirmity of noble mind)

To scorn delights and live laborious days;
 But the fair guerdon when we hope to find,
 And think to burst out into sudden ³³ blaze,
 Comes the ³⁴ blind Fury with abhorred shears
 And slits the thin-spun life. "But not the praise,"
 Phœbus replied, and touch'd my ³⁵ trembling ears;
 "Fame is no plant that grows on mortal soil,
 Nor in the ³⁶ glistening foil
 Let off to the world, nor in broad rumor lies: 80
 But lives and spreads aloft by those ³⁷ pure eyes
 And perfect witness of all-judging Jove;
 As he pronounces lastly on each deed,
 Of so much fame in heaven expect thy meed."

O fountain ³⁸ Arethuse, and thou honor'd flood
 Smooth-sliding Mincius, crown'd with vocal reeds!
 That strain I heard was of a higher mood;
 But now my ³⁹ oat proceeds,
 And listens to the ⁴⁰ herald of the sea

90 That came in Neptune's plea.

He ask'd the waves, and ask'd the felon winds,
 What hard mishap hath doom'd this gentle swain?
 And question'd every gust of ⁴¹ rugged wings
 That blows from off each beaked promontory.
 They knew not of his story;
 And sage ⁴² Hippotades their answer brings,
 That not a blast was from his dungeon stray'd;
 The air was calm, and on the level brine
 Sleek ⁴³ Panope with all her sisters play'd.

100 It was that fatal and perfidious bark,
 Built in the ⁴⁴ eclipse, and rigg'd with curses dark,
 That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.

Next ⁴⁵ Camus, reverend sire, went footing slow,
 His mantle hairy, and his bonnet sedge,
 Inwrought with figures dim, and on the edge
 Like to that sanguine flower inscrib'd with woe.
 "Ah! who hath reft" (quoth he) "my dearest pledge?"
 Last came, and last did go,
 The ⁴⁶ pilot of the Galilean lake;

110 Two massy keys he bore of metals twain,
 (The golden opes, the iron shuts amain,)
 He shook his miter'd locks, and stern bespake:

"How well could I have spared for thee, young swain,
 Enow of such, as for their bellies' sake
 Creep and intrude and ⁴⁷ climb into the fold?
 Of other care they little reckoning make
 Than how to scramble at the shearers' feast,
 And shove away the worthy bidden guest.

⁴⁸ Blind mouths! that scarce themselves know how to
 hold

120 A sheep-hook, or have learnt aught else the least
 That to the faithful herdman's art belongs!

What ⁴⁹recks it them? What need they? They are
sped;

And, when they list, their lean and flashy songs
Grate on their scrannel pipes of wretched straw;
The ⁵⁰hungry sheep look up and are not fed,
But, swoln with wind and the rank mist they draw,
Rot inwardly, and foul contagion spread:
Besides what the ⁵¹grim wolf with privy paw
Daily devours apace, and nothing sed:
But that ⁵²two-handed engine at the door 130
Stands ready to smite once, and smite no more."

Return ⁵³Alpheus, the dread voice is past
That shrunk thy streams; return, Sicilian Muse,
And call the vales, and bid them hither cast
Their bells and ⁵⁴flowrets of a thousand hues.
Ye valleys low, where the mild whispers use
Of shades and wanton winds and gushing brooks
On whose fresh lap the swart-star sparely looks,
Throw hither all your quaint enamell'd eyes,
That on the green turf suck the honey'd showers, 140
And purple all the ground with vernal flowers.
Bring the ⁵⁵rathe primrose that forsaken dies,
The tufted crow-toe, and pale jessamine,
The white pink, and the pansy freak'd with jet,
The glowing violet,
The musk-rose, and the well-attir'd woodbine,
With cowslips wan that hang the pensive head,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears:
Bid amaranthus all his beauty shed,
And daffadillies fill their cups with tears, 150
To strew the ⁵⁶laureate hearse where Lycid lies.
For, so to interpose a little ease,
⁵⁷Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise;

Ay me ! whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurl'd,
Whether beyond the stormy Hebrides,
Where thou, perhaps, under the whelming tide
Visit'st the bottom of the ⁵⁸ monstrous world ;
Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
160 Sleep'st by the fable of ⁵⁹ Bellerus old,
Where the great vision of the guarded mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold ;
Look homeward, ⁶⁰ angel, now, and melt with ruth,
And O ye dolphins, waft the hapless youth.

⁶¹ Weep no more, woful shepherds, weep no more,
For Lycidas your sorrow is ⁶² not dead,
Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor.
So sinks the day-star in the ocean bed,
And yet anon repairs his ⁶³ drooping head,
170 And tricks his beams, and with new-spangled ore
Flames in the forehead of the morning sky :
So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
Through the dear might of him that walk'd the waves,
Where, other groves and other streams along,
With nectar pure his oozy locks he laves,
And hears the ⁶⁴ unexpressive nuptial song,
In the blest kingdoms meek of joy and love.
⁶⁵ There entertain him all the saints above,
In solemn troops, and sweet societies,
180 That sing, and, singing in their glory, move,
And ⁶⁶ wipe the tears forever from his eyes.

Now, Lycidas, the shepherds weep no more ;
Henceforth thou art the ⁶⁷ Genius of the shore,
In thy large recompense, and shalt be good
To all that wander in that perilous flood.

Thus sang the ⁶⁸ uncouth swain to the oaks and rills,
 While the still Morn went out with sandals gray.
 He touch'd the tender stops of various quills,
 With eager thought warbling his ⁶⁹ Doric lay;
⁷⁰ And now the Sun had stretch'd out all the hills, 190
 And now was dropt into the western, bay.
⁷¹ At last he rose, and twitch'd his mantle blue:
 To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.

NOTES.

THE AUTHOR.

John Milton was born in Bread street, London, December 9, 1608. He was educated at St. Paul's School, London, and at Christ's College, Cambridge. His first poem of importance was the *Hymn on the Morning of Christ's Nativity*, written in 1629. This was followed by *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*, companion pieces, by the *Arcades* (1633), and by the dramatic poem *Comus* (1637). *Lycidas* was also written in 1637. From 1640 until the decline of the Commonwealth, Milton took an active part in politics, and his writings during this period were entirely prose. *Paradise Lost*, his greatest work, appeared in 1667. *Paradise Regained* and the tragedy *Samson Agonistes* were published in 1671. Milton died in 1674. See note on *Adonais*, iv. 9.

"Milton! thou should'st be living at this hour:
 England hath need of thee: she is a fen
 Of stagnant waters: altar, sword, and pen,
 Fireside, the heroic wealth of hall and bower,
 Have forfeited their ancient English dower
 Of inward happiness. We are selfish men;
 Oh! raise us up, return to us again;
 And give us manners, virtue, freedom, power.
 Thy soul was like a Star, and dwelt apart:
 Thou hadst a voice whose sound was like the sea:
 Pure as the naked heavens, majestic, free,
 So didst thou travel on life's common way,
 In cheerful godliness; and yet thy heart
 The lowliest duties on herself did lay." — *Wordsworth* (1802).

THE POEM.

"This piece, unmatched in the whole range of English poetry, and never again equalled by Milton himself, leaves all criticism behind. Indeed, so high is the poetic note here reached, that the common ear fails to catch it. *Lycidas* is the touchstone of taste; the 18th century criticism could not make anything out of it. . . . It marks the point of transition from the early Milton of mask, pastoral, and idyl, to the quite other Milton, who, after twenty years of hot party struggle, returned to poetry in another vein, — never to the 'woods and pastures' of which he took a final leave in *Lycidas*." — *Mark Pattison*.

THE TITLE.

LYCIDAS is the name of a shepherd in the second Idyl of Bion, and in the third Eclogue of Virgil. Milton probably selected it on account of its original signification of whiteness or purity.

1. **Yet once more.** "Milton's conceptions of a poet's work and of the preparation needed for it were of the highest. He was ever striving after 'inward ripeness,' and conscious how far he was from attaining it. This sense of his unfitness to perform as yet a poet's high duties had determined him to write no more till he was sensible of being maturer; till 'the mellowing year' had dawned. But the death of his dear friend forced him to intermit this high resolve. Therefore 'yet once more' would he write; he would yet again play the poet, though he knew well his proper hour had not yet come." — *Hales*. — **laurels.** See note on *bay tree*, page 72: —

"The laurel, meed of mightie conquerours
And poets sage." — *Faerie Queene*, i. 1, 9.

myrtles. The myrtle was symbolic of love and peace. Pliny relates that the Romans and Sabines made friendship under a myrtle tree, and purified themselves with its branches. — **ivy.** This plant was also a symbol of friendship; it was sacred to Bacchus, and like laurel the meed of poets. See Virgil's *Eclogues*, vii. 27: "Ye Arcadian shepherds, deck with ivy your rising poet." And viii. 13: "Accept my songs and permit this ivy to creep around thy temples among thy victorious laurels."

2. **forc'd.** Forceful, violent.

3. **shatter.** Scatter. Compare with *Paradise Lost*, x. 1065: —

"The winds
Blow moist and keen, shattering the graceful locks
Of these fair-spreading trees."

4. **bitter constraint.** Compare with *hard constraint*, *Pastorall Æglogue*, 41. — **sad occasion.** The *Pastorall Æglogue* has "sad stownd" (see note 52, page 71). — **dear.** Dire, dreadful; possibly from A.-S. *derian*, to hurt: —

"Would I had met my dearest foe in heaven,
Or ever I had seen that day, Horatio." — *Shakespeare, Hamlet*.

The word *dear* as most commonly used, meaning beloved or costly, is from A.-S. *deare*, greatly esteemed, rare.

5. **who would not sing.** See note 7, page 31.

6. **melodious tear.** Tearful melody.

7. **Begin, then.** Compare with Theocritus, *Song of Thyrsis*: "Begin, ye Muses dear," etc. (see page 9); also with Moschus, *Lament for Bion*: "Begin, ye Sicilian Muses," etc. See note 1, page 14. The "Sisters of the sacred well" are the nine Muses. The sacred well is the Pierian Spring at the foot of Mount Olympus, "the seat of Jove." Here, according to Hesiod, was the birthplace of the Muses. Other fountains, as that of Helicon in Bœotia, and the Castalian Spring near Mount Parnassus, were identified with their worship. Compare with: —

"Rehearse to me, ye sacred Sisters nine,
The golden brood of great Apolloes wit,
Those piteous plaints and sorrowfull sad tune
Which late ye poured fourth as ye did sit
Beside the silver springs of Helicone,
Making your music of hart-breaking mone!"

Spenser, Teares of the Muses, 1-6.

"With the Muses of Helicon let us begin to sing, with them who haunt the mountain, vast and divine, of Helicon, and with tender feet dance round the dark-colored fountain and altar of mighty Jove." — *Hesiod, Theogony*, 1.

8. **sweep the string.** Compare with Pope: —

"Descend, ye Nine, . . .
And sweep the sounding lyre." — *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*.

9. **Muse.** Poet; as in Shakespeare's *Sonnet*, 21: —

"So is it not with me as with that Muse,
Stirred by a painted beauty to his verse."

— **destin'd urn.** Coffin, grave. See note 56, below.

10. **sable shroud.** Black coffin, — that is, the "destin'd urn" mentioned above.

11. They had both been educated at the same college — Christ's College, Cambridge.

12. **high lawns.** Compare with Gray's *Elegy*, vii.

13. **eyelids of the Morn.** Compare with *Romeo and Juliet*, ii. 3, 1:—

"The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night."

And with *Job* iii. 9, marg.:—

"Neither let it see the eyelids of the morning."

14. **drove afield.** See Gray's *Elegy*, stanza vii.

15. **her sultry horn.** Compare with Collins:—

"Or where the beetle winds
His small but sullen horn,
As oft he rises 'midst the twilight path,
Against the pilgrim borne in heedless hum."—*Ode to Evening*.

The gray-fly, or trumpet-fly, hums during the hottest part of the day.
Compare with Gray's *Elegy*, ii. 3.

16. **Battening.** Feeding, taking care of.

17. **westering.** Westward going. Compare with Chaucer, *Troilus and Creseide*, ii. 906:—

"The daies honour and the Heavens eye
Gan westren fast, and downward for to wrie."

18. **oaten flute.** See note 1, page 66.

19. **Satyrs and Fauns.** The University men at Cambridge. But compare the expression with Virgil, *Eclogue* vi. 27: "Then you might have seen the Fauns and savages frisking in measured dance, then the stiff oaks waving their tops." The passage is imitated by Pope in *Pastorals*, ii:—

"Rough Satyrs dance, and Pan applauds the song."

20. **old Damœtas.** "Probably W. Chappell, the tutor of Christ's College in Milton and King's time."—*Hales*. Both Theocritus and Virgil use the name in their pastorals. Damœtas is also a prominent character in Sidney's *Arcadia*.

21. **woods and desert caves.** Compare with the *Lament for Bion*, line 15, page 40.

22. **echoes.** See *Lament for Bion*, line 13, page 40; also *Adonais*, stanza 15, page 122. Compare with Wordsworth, *Intimations of Immortality*:—

"I hear the echoes through the mountain throng."

23. **canker.** A disease incident to trees, causing the bark to fall off. The word was also formerly used to indicate a worm or insect injurious to

roses, and such is probably its meaning here. See Shakespeare, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, ii. 2, 3:—

"Some to kill cankers in the musk-rose buds."

24. taint-worm. A parasitic insect, or larva, destructive to animals, especially sheep.

25. Where were ye, Nymphs? See *Sorrow of Daphnis*, line 2, page 9; also note on the same. Compare this and the passage following it with Virgil's *Eclogues*, x.: "What groves, ye virgin Naiads, detained you? . . . For neither any of the tops of Parnassus, nor those of Pindus nor Aonian Aganippe, did retard you."

26. the steep. Probably Kerig-y-Druidion among the heights of South Denbighshire, where were the burial places of the Druids. Another supposition is that Penmaenmawr in Wales is meant. See Gray's *Bard*.

27. shaggy top of Mona. The island of Anglesey, "called by the bards 'the shady island,' because it formerly abounded with groves of trees; but there is now little wood, except along the bank of the Menai."

28. Deva. The river Dee:—

"Dee, which Britons long ygone

Did call divine, that doth by Chester turn."

Spenser, The Faerie Queene, iv. 11.

29. fondly. Used here in its original meaning of *foolishly*.

30. Muse. Calliope was the mother of Orpheus. The latter was torn in pieces by the Thracian women while under the influence of their Bacchanalian orgies. His head was thrown into the Hebrus river, down which it floated to the sea, and was finally carried to Lesbos, where it was recovered and buried. See Pope's *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*:—

"See, wild as the winds, o'er the desert he flies;

Hark! Hæmus resounds with the Bacchanals' cries—

Ah see, he dies!"

See also Virgil's *Georgics*, iv. 520: "The Ciconian matrons, amid the sacred service by the gods and nocturnal orgies of Bacchus, having torn the youth in pieces, scattered his limbs over the wide fields. And then Cægrian Hebrus rolled down the middle of its tide his head torn from the alabaster neck." See also *Paradise Lost*, vii. 34:—

"That wild rout that tore the Thracian bard

In Rhodope, where woods and rocks had ears

To rapture, till the savage clamor drown'd

Both harp and voice; nor could the Muse defend

Her son."

31. **boots.** Avails. From A.-S. *bōt*, advantage. — to *tend*, etc. "Of what avail is it to devote so much attention to poetry, or the poet's trade?"

Amaryllis. A pastoral sweetheart mentioned by Virgil. See *Eclogues*, i. 4: "You, Tityrus, stretched at ease in the shade, teach the wood to re-echo beauteous Amaryllis." A name applied to the Countess of Derby in Spenser's *Colin Clouts come Home Again*, 435. Milton wrote his *Arcades* as part of an entertainment to be presented in the presence of this same lady by some noble persons of her family (1633). — **Neæra's hair.** Compare with the following lines from Lovelace: —

" When I lie tangled in her hair,
And fetter'd to her eye,
The birds that wanton in the air
Know no such liberty."

32. **the spur.** Hales compares this passage with the following from Dryden: "Reward is the spur of virtue in all good acts, all laudable attempts; and emulation, which is the other spur, will never be wanting when particular rewards are proposed."

33. **blaze.** "For what is glory but the blaze of fame?"

Paradise Regained, iii.

34. **blind Fury.** Milton evidently means the Fate, Atropos, whose office it is to cut the thread of life after it has been spun by her two sisters, Clotho and Lachesis: —

" Sad Clotho held the rocke, the whiles the thrid
By griesly Lachesis was spun with paine,
That cruell Atropos eftsoones undid,
With cursed knife cutting the twist in twaine:
Most wretched men, whose days depend on thrids so vaine."

The Faerie Queene, iv. 2, 48.

"The fatall sisters, Clotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, daughters of Herebus and the Night, whome the poets faine to spin the life of man, as it were a long thred, which they draw out in length, till his fatall houre and timely death be come; but if by other casualtie his daies be abridged, then one of them, that is, Atropos, is said to have cut the threed in twaine." — *Shepheards Calender*, *Glosse*.

35. **trembling ears.** See Virgil's *Eclogues*, vi. 3: "When I offered to sing of kings and battles, Apollo twitched my ear." Touching the ears was probably significant of refreshing the memory. The tingling (trembling ?) of the ears was formerly believed to indicate that some one was talking about the person to whom they belonged: —

"One ear tingles; some there be
That are snarling now at me." — *Herrick, Hesperides.*

36. **glistening foil.** Alluding to the tinsel or metallic leaf used for "setting off" jewels. The connection here is: "Fame is . . . not set off to the world in glistening foil, nor does it lie in broad humor, etc."

37. **pure eyes.** See *Habakkuk* i. 13: "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil."

38. **Arethuse.** See note 15, page 17. The allusion here is to pastoral poetry as exemplified by Theocritus and other Sicilian poets. See also note 53, below. — **Mincius.** A river in northern Italy, tributary to the Po. The poet Virgil's birthplace was on its banks. — **smooth-sliding.** Smoothly gliding.

39. **oat.** See note 1, page 66.

40. **herald of the sea.** Triton, the son of Neptune. He came to plead Neptune's innocence of the death of Lycidas. He calls in the winds as witnesses for the defence. Compare with *A Pastoral Æglogue*, 95.

41. **rugged wings.** Turbulent winds.

42. **Hippotades.** Æolus, the god of the winds, son of Hippotes, "the horseman."

43. **Panope.** One of the sea-nymphs, daughter of Nereus and Doris. Her sisters were the Nereides.

44. **eclipse.** It was a popular superstition that a curse rested upon whatever was done during an eclipse. Compare *Paradise Lost*, i. 597: —

"As when the sun . . .

. . . from behind the moon

In dim eclipse disastrous twilight sheds."

See also Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, iv. 1, 28.

The conclusion of Triton's investigations concerning the causes of the wreck is that the ship on which Lycidas had embarked was unseaworthy, and that she sank in calm waters.

45. **Camus.** The genius of the river Cam, on which is situated Cambridge, and the university wherein Lycidas was nurtured, — hence called "reverend sire." Compare with *The Mourning Muse of Thestylis* (1587): —

"The Thames was heard to roar, the Reyne, and eke the Mose,

With torment and with grief: their fountains pure and cleere

Were troubled, and with swelling flouds declared their woes."

In further explanation of this passage Plumptre says: "The 'mantle' is as if made of the plant 'river-sponge,' which floats copiously in the Cam; the 'bonnet' of the river-sedge, distinguished by vague marks traced somehow over the middle of the leaves after the fashion of the *al*, *al*, of the hyacinth." See note 2, page 44.

46. pilot. St. Peter. In Christian art he is represented, as here, with two keys; hence, two keys, borne saltire-wise, are the insignia of the Pope. The bishops of Winchester, Gloucester, Exeter, St. Asaph, and Peterborough, in England, also bear two keys. The leading thought in the next twenty-three lines seems to be the loss which the church sustained by the death of Lycidas.

47. climb into the fold. See *John* x. 1. "He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber." Milton refers to false teachers and preachers, and especially to the corruptions existing in the church. His sympathies are with the Puritans, just then rising into power, as opposed to the ritualism which was then being enforced by Archbishop Laud.

48. blind mouths. "A singularly violent figure, as if men were mouths and nothing else." — *Masson*.

49. recks. Concerns. "What do they care?" From A.-S. *recan*, to care for. Compare with Milton's *Comus*, 404: —

"Of night or loneliness it recks me not,"

sped. Provided for. Compare with Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, ii. 9, 72: "So, begone; you are sped." — **list.** Wish, choose. That is, when they choose to exercise the herdsman's art. — **scrannel.** Akin to *scrawny*, lean, thin, insufficient.

50. hungry sheep. Compare this entire passage with Spenser, *Shepherds Calender*, May: —

"Thilke same bene shepheardes for the devils stedde,
That playen while their flockes be unfedde.
But they bene hyred for little pay
Of other, that cared as little as they
What fallen the flocke, so they hau the fleece."

51. grim wolf. Probably an allusion to the Catholic Church, which was at that time having many accessions.

52. two-handed engine. "He means to say generally that the time of retribution is at hand. Some commentators, unwisely in my opinion, take the words as a definite prophecy of Laud's execution (in 1645). Certainly they could never have been understood in that sense at the time of the poem's first publication 'under the sanction and from the press of one of our universities,' and when 'the proscriptions of the Star Chamber and the power of Laud were at their height.'" — *Hales*. Compare with *Matt.* iii. 10. "And now also the axe is laid at the root of the trees." Also *Luke* iii. 9.

53. Alpheus. See note on *Arethusa*, above. In the *Arcades*, Milton refers to the —

" Divine Alpheus, who by secret sluice
Stole under seas to meet his Arethuse."

The name is used here, however, simply as a personification of pastoral poetry, and Milton means that after his digression on churches and pastors he will now return to his original strain.

54. **flowrets.** Compare this entire passage with the passages quoted or referred to in notes 15 and 16, pages 33 and 34.

55. **rathe.** Early. Still retained in its comparative form, *rather*.

56. **laureate hearse.** Poet tomb. Compare with Milton's *Epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester* : —

" And some flowers and some bays
For thy hearse to strew the ways,
Sent thee from the banks of Came."

57. **Let our frail thoughts,** etc. That is, let us imagine that Lycidas really lies in a tomb and is not lost in the vast ocean.

58. **monstrous world.** World of monsters.

59. **Bellerus.** A Cornish giant. "Bellerium was the name formerly given to the promontory of the Land's End. It was the home of a mighty giant, after whom, in all probability, the headland was called." — Hunt's *Romances of the West of England*. Milton at first wrote it Corineus, a giant from whom the name Cornwall was derived. — **guarded mount.** Mount St. Michaels, a steep rock near Penzance in Cornwall. Warton says : "There is still a tradition that a vision of St. Michael seated on this crag, appeared to some hermits." The land here looks almost directly towards Namancos and Bayona near Cape Finisterre.

60. **angel.** St. Michael. That is, turn your gaze away from the distant Spanish coast and look towards the shores where doubtless the body of Lycidas lies.

61. **Weep no more,** etc. See *The Sorrow of Daphnis*, page 12.

62. **not dead.** See *Adonais*, xxxix. 1. Compare with the Countess of Pembroke's *Dolefull Lay of Clorinda* : —

" Ay me, can so divine a thing be dead?
Ah! no: it is not dead, ne can it die."

63. **drooping head.** Compare with Gray's *Bard* : —

" To-morrow he repairs the golden flood."

64. **unexpressive.** Inexpressible. — **nuptial song.** See page 36.

65. **There entertain him,** etc. Compare this entire passage with *The Dolefull Lay of Clorinda* : —

" There liveth he in everlasting blis,
 Sweet Spirit never fearing more to die :
 Ne dreading harm from any foes of his,
 Ne fearing salvage beasts more crueltie."

Also with *Pastorall Æglogue*, line 136; also *The Faerie Queene*, iii. 6, 48 : —

" There now he liveth in eternal blis,
 Ioying his goddess, and of her enioyd."

Also *Paradise Lost*, xi. 82 : —

" By the waters of life, where'er they sat
 In fellowships of joy."

Also *The Shepheards Calender*, *November* : —

" There lives shee with the blessed gods in blisse,
 There drincks she nectar with ambrosia mixt,
 And ioyes enioyes that mortall men doe misse.
 The honor now of highest gods she is."

66. **wipe the tears.** Compare with *Revelation* vii. 17 : " And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

67. **Genius.** Good spirit, guardian angel. — **recompense.** That is, in the great compensation or reward which is thine. Compare with Shakespeare, *The Tempest*, iv. I, 1 : —

" If I have too austere-ly punished you,
 Your compensation makes amends."

68. **uncouth.** Uncultivated, rude; perhaps rather in the sense of unknown.

69. **Doric lay.** See note 5, page 45.

70. **And now**, etc. Compare with *Jeremiah* vi. 4 : " For the shadows of the evening are stretched out." Also with Pope's *Pastorals*, iii. : —

" Thus sung the shepherds till the approach of night,
 The skies yet blushing with departing light,
 When falling dews with spangles deck'd the glade,
 And the low sun had lengthen'd every shade."

And with Virgil, *Eclogue* i. 83 : " And now the high tops of the villages smoke afar off, and longer shadows fall from the lofty mountains."

71. **At last.** Compare with Fletcher, *The Purple Island* : —

" Hence, then, my lambs ; the falling drops eschew :
 To-morrow shall ye feast in pastures new."

ELEGY

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD

By Thomas Gray

1750

"GRAY'S Elegy is perhaps the most widely known poem in our language. The reason of this extensive popularity is perhaps to be sought in the fact that it expresses in an exquisite manner feelings and thoughts that are universal. In the current ideas of the Elegy there is perhaps nothing that is rare, or exceptional, or out of the common way. The musings are of the most rational and obvious character possible; it is difficult to conceive of any one musing under similar circumstances who should not muse so; but they are not the less deep and moving on this account. The mystery of life does not become clearer, or less solemn and awful, for any amount of contemplation. Such inevitable, such everlasting questions as rise in the mind when one lingers in the precincts of Death can never lose their freshness, never cease to fascinate and to move. It is with such questions, that would have been commonplace long ages since if they could ever be so, that the Elegy deals. It deals with them in no lofty philosophical manner, but in a simple, humble, unpretentious way, always with the truest and broadest humanity. The poet's thoughts turn to the poor; he forgets the fine tombs inside the church, and thinks only of the 'mouldering heaps' in the churchyard. Hence the problem that especially suggests itself is the potential greatness, when they lived, of the 'rude forefathers' that now lie at his feet. He does not and cannot solve it, though he finds considerations to mitigate the sadness it must inspire; but he expresses it in all its awfulness in the most effective language and with the deepest feeling; and his expression of it has become a living part of our language." — REV.

J. W. HALES.

Elegy

WRITTEN IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.



I.

THE ¹curfew tolls the knell of parting day,
The lowing herd ²wind slowly o'er the lea,
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

2.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,³
Save where the ⁴beetle wheels his droning flight,
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

3.

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,
The moping owl does to the moon complain
Of such as, wandering near her secret bower,
Molest her ancient solitary ⁵reign.

4.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,
Where heaves ⁶ the turf in many a mouldering heap,
Each in his narrow cell forever laid,
The ⁷ rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

5.

The breezy call of ⁸ incense-breathing morn,
The swallow twittering from the straw-built shed,
The cock's shrill ⁹ clarion, or the echoing horn,
No more shall rouse them from their ¹⁰ lowly bed.

6.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,
Or busy housewife ¹¹ ply her evening care :
No children run to lisp their sire's return,¹²
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

7.

Oft did the harvest to their sickle yield,
Their furrow oft the stubborn ¹³ glebe has broke ;
How jocund did they drive their team ¹⁴ afield !
How bow'd the woods beneath their ¹⁵ sturdy stroke !

8.

Let not Ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure ;
Nor Grandeur hear with a disdainful smile
The short and simple annals of the poor.¹⁶

9.

The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,
Awaits alike th' inevitable hour.
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.¹⁷

10.

Nor you, ye proud, impute to these the fault,
If Memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,
Where, through the long-drawn ¹⁸ aisle and fretted vault,
The ¹⁹ pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

11.

Can ²⁰ storied urn or animated bust
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?
Can Honor's voice ²¹ provoke the silent dust?
Or Flattery soothe the dull cold ear of Death?

12.

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;²²
Hands, that the rod of empire might have sway'd,
Or waked to ecstasy the living lyre:

13.

But Knowledge to their eyes her ample ²³ page,
Rich with the spoils of time, did ne'er unroll;
Chill Penury repress'd their noble ²⁴ rage,
And froze the genial current of the soul.

14.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear;²⁵
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.²⁶

15.

Some village Hampden, that with dauntless breast
The little tyrant of his fields withstood,
Some mute inglorious Milton here may rest,
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.²⁷

16.

Th' applause of listening senates to command,²⁸
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,²⁹
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

17.

Their lot forbade : nor circumscrib'd alone
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd ;
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind,

18.

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,
To quench the blushes of ingenuous shame,
Or heap the shrine of Luxury and Pride
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.³⁰

19.

Far from the ³¹ madding crowd's ignoble strife
Their sober wishes never learn'd to stray ;
Along the cool, sequester'd vale of life
They kept the noiseless ³² tenor of their way.

20.

Yet even these bones from insult to protect,
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,
With ³³ uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.³⁴

21.

Their name, their years, spelt by th' unletter'd Muse,
The place of fame and ³⁵ elegy supply ;
And many a holy text around she strews,
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

22.

For who, to dumb Forgetfulness a prey,
This pleasing anxious being e'er resign'd,
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,
Nor cast one longing lingering look behind ? ³⁶

23.

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,
Some pious drops the closing eye requires ; ³⁷
Even from the tomb the voice of nature cries,
Even in our ashes live their wonted fires.³⁸

24.

For thee, who, mindful of th' unhonor'd dead,
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate,
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate,

25.

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say,
"Oft have we seen him at the ³⁹ peep of dawn
Brushing with hasty steps the dews away,
To meet the sun upon the ⁴⁰ upland lawn.

26.

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,
That wreathes its old fantastic roots so high,
His listless length at noontide would he stretch,
And pore upon the brook that babbles by."⁴¹

27.

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,
Muttering his wayward fancies he would rove ;
Now drooping, woeful wan, like one forlorn,
Or craz'd with care, or cross'd in hopeless love.

28.

"One morn I miss'd him on the custom'd hill,
Along the heath and near his favorite tree ;
Another came ; nor yet beside the rill,
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he.

29.

"The next, with dirges ⁴² due in sad array,
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne.
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay
Grav'd on the stone beneath yon aged thorn." ⁴³

THE EPITAPH.

30.

Here rests his head upon the ⁴⁴lap of Earth,
A youth, to Fortune and to Fame unknown:
Fair Science frown'd not on his humble birth,
And Melancholy mark'd him for her own.

31.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere,
Heaven did a recompense as largely send;
He gave to Misery all he had, a tear,
He gain'd from Heaven ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.

32.

No farther seek his merits to disclose,
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode,
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),
The bosom of his Father and his God.

NOTES.

THE AUTHOR.

Thomas Gray, born in Cornhill, London, December 26, 1716, was the son of a money scrivener. He was educated at Eton and at Pembroke College, Cambridge. In 1742 he took up his residence at Cambridge, where he spent the remainder of his life chiefly engaged in study. It is said of him that he was master in all departments of human learning except mathematics. His poems are not numerous, but they all bear the mark of merit. Besides the *Elegy*, the best known are the *Ode to Spring*, the *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*, the *Ode to Adversity*, *The Progress of Poesy*, and *The Bard*. Gray died on the 30th of July, 1771. His literary and personal peculiarities "are familiar to us," says Robert Carruthers, "from the numerous representations and allusions of his friends. It is easy to fancy the recluse-poet sitting in his college chambers in the old quadrangle of Pembroke Hall. His windows are ornamented with mignonette and choice flowers in China vases, but outside may be discerned some iron-work intended to be serviceable as a fire-escape, for he has a horror of fire. His furniture is neat and select; his books, rather for use than show, are disposed around him. He has a harpsichord in the room. In the corner of one of the apartments is a trunk containing his deceased mother's dresses, carefully folded up and preserved. His fastidiousness, bordering upon effeminacy, is visible in his gait and manner, in his handsome features and small, well-dressed person, especially when he walks abroad and sinks the author and hard student in 'the gentleman who sometimes writes for his amusement.' He writes always with a crow-quill, speaks slowly and sententiously, and shuns the crew of dissonant college revellers, who call him 'a prig,' and seek to annoy him. Long mornings of study, and nights feverish from ill-health, are spent in those chambers; he is often listless and in low spirits; yet his natural temper is not desponding, and he delights in employment. He has always something to learn or to communicate; some sally of humor or quiet stroke of satire for his friends and correspondents; some note on natural history to enter in his journal; some passage of Plato to unfold and illustrate; some golden thought of classic inspiration to inlay on his page; some bold image to tone down; some verse to retouch and harmonize. His life is, on the whole, innocent and happy, and a feeling of thankfulness to the Great Giver is breathed over all."

THE POEM.

"It may at once be said that it was begun at Stoke in October or November, 1742, continued at Stoke immediately after the funeral of Gray's aunt, Miss Mary Antrobus, in November, 1749, and finished at Cambridge in June, 1750. It may be here remarked as a very singular fact that the death of a valued friend seems to have been the stimulus of greatest efficacy in rousing Gray to the composition of poetry, and did, in fact, excite him to the completion of most of his important poems. He was a man who had a very slender hold on life himself, who walked habitually in the Valley of the Shadow of Death, and whose periods of greatest vitality were those in which bereavement proved to him that, melancholy as he was, even he had something to lose and to regret." — *Edmund Gosse*.

"Had Gray written nothing but his *Elegy*, high as he stands, I am not sure that he would not stand higher; it is the corner-stone of his glory." — *Lord Byron*.

1. curfew. Fr. *couvre-feu*; *couvrir*, to cover, and *feu*, fire. The custom in England of ringing a bell at nightfall dates from a very early period, although it was probably neither general nor obligatory until the time of William the Conqueror. Peshall, in his *History of Oxford*, says: "The custom of ringing the bell at Carfax every night at eight o'clock was by order of King Alfred, the restorer of our University, who ordained that all persons at the ringing of that bell should cover up their fires and go to bed; which Custom is observed to this day." See Milton, *Il Penseroso*, 73:—

"Oft on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-water'd shore,
Swinging low with sullen roar."

Compare with Dante, *Purgatorio*, 8:—

"If he doth hear from far away a bell
That seemeth to deplore the dying day."

And Milton, *Comus*, 434:—

"Stubborn unlaid ghost
That breaks his chains at curfew time."

parting. Departing. Compare with Milton, *Hymn on the Nativity*, 185:—

"The parting Genius is with sighing sent."

Also with Scott, *Marmion*, iii. 13:—

"Seemed in mine ear a death-peal rung,
Such as in nunneries they toll
For some departing sister's soul."

2. **wind.** This is generally printed *winds*, but it was not so written by Gray.—**ploughman.** Compare with Burns, *Cotter's Saturday Night*, 14:—

"The toil-worn Cotter frae his labor goes."

Also with Pope, *Pastorals*, iii.:—

"While laboring oxen spent with toil and heat,
In their loose traces from the fields retreat:
While curling smoke from village-tops are seen,
And fleet shades glide o'er the dusky green."

3. This line in prose would read: "And a solemn stillness holds all the air."

4. **beetle.** Compare Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, iii. 2:—

"Ere to black Hecate's summons
The shard-borne beetle, with his drowsy hums,
Hath rung night's yawning peal."

See *Lycidas*, 28.

5. **reign.** Domain:—

"Apollo, Pallas, Jove, and Mars
Held undisturbed their ancient reign."

Alfred Dommet, Christmas Hymn.

6. **the turf.** Compare this, and indeed the entire stanza, with *In Memoriam*, x.

7. **rude.** Uncultured. Milton would probably say uncouth; as, "uncouth swain," *Lycidas*, 186.

8. **incense-breathing morn.** See Milton, *Arcades*, 156:—

"And early, ere the odorous breath of morn
Awakes the slumbering leaves."

Also *Paradise Lost*, iv. 641:—

"Sweet is the breath of morn, her rising sweet."

9. **clarion.** A shrill sounding trumpet. Compare with *Paradise Lost*, vii. 443:—

"The crested cock whose clarion sounds
The silent hours."

Also *Hamlet*, i. 1 : —

"The cock that is the trumpet to the morn."

And Kyd's *England's Parnassus* : —

"The cheerful cock, the sad night's trumpeter,
Waiting upon the rising of the sun."

10. **lowly bed.** There is no figurative meaning in these words.

11. **ply her evening care.** "This is probably the kind of phrase which led Wordsworth to pronounce the language of the *Elegy* unintelligible. Compare his own —

"And she I cherished turned her wheel
Beside an English fire" — *Hales*.

12. Compare with Burns, *Cotter's Saturday Night*, 21 : —

"Th' expectant wee things toddlin', stacher thro'
To meet their dad, wi' flichterin noise an' glee."

or **climb his knees.** Compare with the same, 25 : —

"The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile."

Also with Thomson, *Liberty*, iii. 171 : —

"His little children climbing for a kiss."

13. **glebe.** Turf. From Lat. *gleba*, clod : —

"'Tis mine to tame the stubborn glebe." — *Gay*.

14. **afield.** See *Lycidas*, 27.

15. **sturdy stroke.** See *The Shepherds Calender*, February : —

"But to the roote bent his sturdy stroake,
And made many wounds in the wast Oak."

16. Burns uses this stanza as an introduction to his *Cotter's Saturday Night*.

17. Compare with this stanza from the *Monody on Queen Caroline* (1737), written by Gray's friend, Richard West : —

"Ah me! what boots us all our boasted power,
Our golden treasure, and our purple state;
They cannot ward the inevitable hour,
Nor stay the fearful violence of fate."

Lossing relates the following story of General Wolfe on the eve of the battle of Quebec (1759): "At past midnight, when the heavens were

hung with black clouds, and the boats were floating silently back with the tide to the intended landing-place at the chosen ascent to the Plains of Abraham, he repeated in a low tone to the officers around him this touching stanza of Gray's *Elegy*. 'Now, gentlemen,' said Wolfe, 'I would rather be the author of that poem than the possessor of the glory of beating the French to-morrow.' He fell the next day, and expired just as the shouts of victory of the English fell upon his almost unconscious ears." — **awaits**. In prose the first sentence would read, "The inevitable hour awaits alike the boast of heraldry, the pomp of power, and all that beauty or wealth e'er gave."

18. aisle. Fr. *aile*; originally written so in English, and meaning, as here, a little wing, or lateral division of the church. Now used to designate the *alley*, or passage-way, into which the pews open. Compare this line with Milton, *Il Penseroso*, 155:—

"But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale,
And love the high embowed roof,
With antique pillars massy proof."

fretted. Ornamented with frets or interlacing bands. Compare with Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ii. 2:—

"This majestic roof fretted with golden fire."

19. pealing anthem. See *Il Penseroso*, 161:—

"There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below,
In service high, and anthem clear."

20. storied urn. See *Il Penseroso*, 159:—

"And storied windows richly dight."

animated bust. Life-like bust, or monument.

21. provoke. From Lat. *pro* and *voco*, to call forth, and here used in its original meaning.

22. Compare with Cowper, *Boadicea*, 33:—

"Such the bard's prophetic words,
Pregnant with celestial fire,
Bending as he swept the chords
Of his sweet but awful lyre."

23. page . . . unroll. Ancient books were in the form of rolls. Hence we have volume, from Lat. *volvere*, to roll.—**rich with the spoils of time.** Compare with Sir Thomas Browne, *Religio Medici*, i. 13:—

" And then at last, when homeward I shall drive
Rich with the spoils of nature," etc.

24. *rage.* Enthusiasm, inspiration. See Collins, *The Passions*, 110:—

" Thy humblest reed could more prevail,
Had more of strength, diviner rage,
Than all which charms this Laggard age."

25. Compare these two lines with the following passage in Bishop Hall's *Contemplations*, written more than a hundred years earlier: "There is many a rich stone laid up in the bowells of the earth, many a fair pearle in the bosom of the sea, that never was scene nor never shall bee."

26. Compare these two lines with Waller (1650):—

" Go, lovely rose, . . .
Tell her that's young
And shuns to have her graces spied,
That hadst thou sprung
In deserts, where no men abide,
Thou must have uncommended died."

Also with Pope, *Rape of the Locke*, iv. 158:—

" There kept my charms conceal'd from every eye,
Like roses, that in deserts bloom and die."

Mitford compares with Chamberlayne's *Pharronida* (1659):—

" Like beauteous flowers which vainly waste their scent
Of odours in unhaunted deserts."

27. This stanza was at first written thus:—

" Some Village Cato who with dauntless Breast
The little Tyrant of his Fields withstood;
Some mute inglorious Tully here may rest;
Some Cæsar guiltless of his Country's Blood."

For the proper names, Hampden, Milton, Cromwell, consult some English history of the seventeenth century.

28. Hales says: "The great age of Parliamentary oratory was just dawning when the *Elegy* was published. The elder Pitt was already famous for his eloquence."

29. Compare with the following by Tickell:—

" To scatter blessings o'er the British land,"

or with this by Mrs. Behn:—

" Is scattering plenty over all the land."

30. Reference is here made to the fawning adulation for great men common at that time. In Gray's first copy of the poem, the remaining stanzas were as follows:—

"The thoughtless World to Majesty may bow
Exalt the brave, & idolize Success
But more to Innocence their Safety owe
Than Power & Genius e'er conspir'd to bless

"And thou, who mindful of the unhonour'd Dead
Dost in these Notes their artless Tale relate
By Night & lonely Contemplation led
To linger in the gloomy Walks of Fate

"Hark how the sacred Calm, that broods around
Bids ev'ry fierce tumultuous Passion cease
In still small Accents whisp'ring from the Ground
A grateful Earnest of eternal Peace

"No more with Reason & thyself at Strife
Give anxious Cares & endless Wishes room
But thro the cool sequester'd Vale of Life
Pursue the silent Tenour of thy Doom."

It will be noticed that the second of these stanzas, with some revisions, is retained in the poem (see the sixth stanza, below). Also that the last two lines of the fourth (altered) appear at the end of the first stanza, below.

31. **madding.** Exciting, disturbed, raging. Compare with Johnson, *Vanity of Human Wishes*, 39:—

"Let hist'ry tell where rival kings command,
And dubious title shakes the madded land."

And with Drummond, *Praise of a Solitary Life*:—

"Thrice happy he who by some shady grove
Far from the clamorous world doth live his own."

32. **tenor of their way.** So Beilby Porteus (1731-1808), in his poem on *Death*, says:—

"The venerable patriarch guileless held
The tenor of his way."

33. **uncouth rhymes.** Untaught, unknown, unlearned. Milton has "uncouth cell," "uncouth swain," etc.

34. Compare with *Lycidas*, 19-22.

35. **elegy.** Hales says: "This was an age much given to elaborate epitaphs and elegies. Gray himself had contributed to this funeral literature. See also Pope's works, Goldsmith's, etc., and the walls and monu-

ments of Westminster Abbey, *passim*. This style of writing still survives in country places; but happily even there is growing rarer."

36. "At the first glance it might seem that *to dumb Forgetfulness a prey* was in apposition to *who*, and the meaning was, 'Who that now lies forgotten,' etc.; in which case the second line of the stanza must be closely connected with the fourth; for the question of the passage is not 'Who ever died?' but 'Who ever died without wishing to be remembered?' But in this way of interpreting this difficult stanza (i.) there is comparatively little force in the appositional phrase, and (ii.) there is a certain awkwardness in deferring so long the clause (virtually adverbial though apparently co-ordinate) in which, as has just been noticed, the point of the question really lies. Perhaps therefore it is better to take the phrase *to dumb Forgetfulness a prey* as in fact the completion of the predicate *resign'd*, and interpret thus: 'Who ever resigned this life of his with all its pleasures and all its pains to be utterly ignored and forgotten? = who ever, when resigning it, reconciled himself to its being forgotten?' In this case the second half of the stanza echoes the thought of the first half." — *Hales*.

37. See note 44, page 70. Compare with the quotations there given.

38. So Chaucer in *The Reves Tale*: —

"Yet in our ashen cold is fire yreken."

And Tennyson in *Maud*, i. 22: —

"She is coming, my own, my sweet,
Were it ever so weary a tread
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead,
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red."

39. *peep of dawn*. Compare with "opening eyelids of the dawn," in *Lycidas*, 26, and see note 13, page 88. See also *Comus*, 138: —

"Ere the blabbing eastern scout,
The nice morn, on the Indian steep,
From her cabin'd loop-hole peep."

And Herrick, *To Music*, etc.: —

"Or like those maiden showers
Which, by the peep of day, do strew
A baptism o'er the flowers."

40. *upland lawn*. See *Lycidas*, 25. Compare also with Milton *L'Allegro*, 92: —

"Sometime with sure delight
The upland hamlets will invite."

Milton also speaks of "russet lawns." A lawn was a pasture or grassy field. An upland lawn was probably such a field on the hill-slopes, although Hales thinks that it is used with reference simply to the country in opposition to towns, as the Old English expression "uplondysche men," was used to designate countrymen.

41. This stanza, as at first written, read thus:—

"Him have we seen the greenwood side along,
While o'er the heath we hied, our labor done,
Oft as the wood-lark piped her farewell song,
With wistful eyes pursue the setting sun."

Compare it as it now reads with Shakespeare, *As You Like It*, ii. 1:—

"As he lay along
Under an oak whose antique root peeps out
Upon the brook that brawls along this road."

Compare the first two lines with Spenser, *Ruins of Rome*, 504:—

"A great oke drie and dead,
Whose foote in ground hath left but feeble holde,
But halfe disbowel'd lies above the ground,
Shewing her wreathed rootes and naked armes."

42. due. Proper. Compare with Milton, *Lycidas*, 7, "season due."—
church-way path. See Shakespeare, *Midsummer Night's Dream*, v.
2, 9:—

"Now it is the time of night,
That the graves all gaping wide,
Every one lets forth his sprite,
In the church-way paths to glide."

43. In the original manuscript these lines follow this stanza:—

"There scatter'd oft, the earliest of the year,
By hands unseen are show'rs of violets found:
The redbreast loves to build and warble there,
And little footsteps lightly print the ground."

44. lap. See Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ix. 777:—

"How glad would lay me down
As in my mother's lap."

Also the same, xi. 535:—

"So may'st thou live, till like ripe fruit thou drop
Into thy mother's lap."

ADONAIS

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS

Author of "Endymion," "Hyperion," etc.

Ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζώοισιν ἑῶς
Νῦν δὲ θανὼν, λάμπεις ἔσπερος ἐν φθίμενοις. — PLATO

By Percy Bysshe Shelley

1821

John Keats died at Rome, of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the 27th of December, 1820, and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where canker-worms abound what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his Endymion, which appeared in the Quarterly Review, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind. The agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued; and the succeeding acknowledgments, from more candid critics, of the true greatness of his powers, were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the Elegy was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of Endymion was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits. The poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care.—From Shelley's Preface.

Adonais.



I.

I weep for Adonais — he is dead !
Oh, weep for Adonais, though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head !
And thou, sad Hour selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow ! Say : “ With me
Died Adonais ; till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity ! ”

II.

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,
When thy son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
In darkness ? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died ? With veiled eyes
'Mid listening Echoes in her paradise
She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,
Rekindled all the fading melodies
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of Death.

III.

Oh, weep for Adonais — he is dead !
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep ! —
Yet wherefore ? Quench within their burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep,
Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep ;
For he is gone where all things wise and fair
Descend : — oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
Will yet restore him to the vital air ;
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our
despair.

IV.

Most musical of mourners, weep again !
Lament anew, Urania ! — he died
Who was the sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
Trampled and mocked with many a loathed rite
Of lust and blood ; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death. But his clear sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth, the third among the sons of
light.

V.

Most musical of mourners, weep anew !
Not all to that bright station dared to climb :
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
In which suns perished. Others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime ;

And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene
abode.

VI.

But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has perished,
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,
And fed with true love tears instead of dew.
Most musical of mourners, weep anew !
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom whose petals, nipped before they blew,
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste ;
The broken lily lies — the storm is overpast.

VII.

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
He came ; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal. — Come away !
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof ! while still
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay.
Awake him not ! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII.

He will wake no more, oh, never more !
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
The shadow of white Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place ;

The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
So fair a prey, till darkness and the law
Of change shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

IX.

Oh, weep for Adonais! — The quick Dreams,
The passion-winged ministers of thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
The love which was its music, wander not, —
Wander no more from kindling brain to brain,
But droop there whence they sprung; and mourn
their lot
Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
They ne'er will gather strength or find a home again.

X.

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries,
“Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain.”
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
She knew not 'twas her own, — as with no stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

XI.

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs as if embalming them;

Another clipt her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem ;
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and winged reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more weak,
And dull the barbed fire against his frozen cheek.

XII.

Another Splendour on his mouth alit,
That mouth whence it was wont to draw the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music : the damp death
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips ;
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,
It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its
eclipse.

XIII.

And others came, — Desires and Adorations,
Winged Persuasions, and veiled Destinies,
Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering incarna-
tions
Of Hopes and Fears, and twilight Phantasies ;
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
Came in slow pomp ; — the moving pomp might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

XIV.

All he had loved, and moulded into thought
From shape and hue and odour and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
Dimmed the aërial eyes that kindle day;
Afar the melancholy Thunder moaned,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild Winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

XV.

Lost Echo sits among the voiceless mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day,
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
Than those for whose disdain she pined away
Into a shadow of all sounds: — a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

XVI.

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,
For whom should she have waked the sullen Year?
To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear,
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou, Adonais; wan they stand and sere
Amid the faint companions of their youth,
With dew all turned to tears, — odour, to sighing ruth.

XVII.

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale,
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain ;
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
Her mighty young with morning, doth complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,
As Albion wails for thee : the curse of Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest !

XVIII.

Ah woe is me ! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year ;
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone ;
The ants, the bees, the swallows, reappear.
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier ;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere ;
And the green lizard and the golden snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

XIX.

Through wood and stream and field and hill and ocean,
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst,
As it has ever done, with change and motion,
From the great morning of the world when first
God dawned on Chaos. In its stream immersed,
The lamps of heaven flash with a softer light ;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst,
Diffuse themselves, and spend in love's delight,
The beauty and the joy of their renewed might.

XX.

The leprous corpse touched by this spirit tender,
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath ;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death,
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath.
Nought we know dies : shall that alone which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless lightning ? Th' intense atom glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

XXI.

Alas ! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal ! Woe is me !
Whence are we, and why are we ? of what scene
The actors or spectators ? Great and mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
As long as skies are blue and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to
sorrow.

XXII.

He will awake no more, oh never more !
"Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless Mother, rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake in thy heart's core
A wound more fierce than his, with tears and sighs."
And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
Had held in holy silence, cried, "Arise !"
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

XXIII.

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
Out of the east, and follows wild and drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear
So struck, so roused, so rapt, Urania ;
So saddened round her like an atmosphere
Of stormy mist ; so swept her on her way,
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

XXIV.

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel
And human hearts, which to her aëry tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell ;
And barbed tongues, and thoughts more sharp than
they,
Rent the soft form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

XXV.

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
Revisited those lips, and life's pale light
Flashed through those limbs so late her dear delight.
“ Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
As silent lightning leaves the starless night !

Leave me not!" cried Urania. Her distress
Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her
vain caress.

XXVI.

"Stay yet a while! speak to me once again!
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live!
And in my heartless breast and burning brain,
That word, that kiss shall all thoughts else survive,
With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am, to be as thou now art:—
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart!

XXVII.

"Oh, gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart,
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
Defenceless as thou wert, oh where was then
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle when
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like
deer.

XXVIII.

"The herded wolves, bold only to pursue,
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead,
The vultures, to the conqueror's banner true,
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,

And whose wings rain contagion, — how they fled,
When, like Apollo, from his golden bow,
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
And smiled! — The spoilers tempt no second blow,
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

XXIX.

“The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again.
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling heaven; and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit’s awful night.”

XXX.

Thus ceased she: and the Mountain Shepherds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent.
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like heaven is bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow. From her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And love taught grief to fall like music from his tongue.

XXXI.

’Midst others of less note came one frail form,
A phantom among men, companionless

As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell. He, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,
Actæon-like; and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts along that rugged way
Pursued like raging hounds their father and their prey.

XXXII.

A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift —
A love in desolation masked — a power
Girt round with weakness; it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow; — even whilst we speak
Is it not broken? On the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may
break.

XXXIII.

His head was bound with pansies over-blown,
And faded violets, white and pied and blue;
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it. Of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

XXXIV.

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band

Who in another's fate now wept his own;
 As in the accents of an unknown land
 He sang new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
 The Stranger's mien, and murmured: "Who art thou?"
 He answered not, but with a sudden hand
 Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
 Which was like Cain's or Christ's — Oh that it should
 be so!

XXXV.

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
 Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
 What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
 In mockery of monumental stone,
 The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
 If it be he, who, gentlest of the wise,
 Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one,
 Let me not vex with inharmonious sighs
 The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

XXXVI.

Our Adonais has drunk poison — oh
 What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
 Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
 The nameless worm would now itself disown:
 It felt, yet could escape, the magic tone
 Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
 But what was howling in one breast alone,
 Silent with expectation of the song
 Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

XXXVII.

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
 Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,

Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at thy season be thou free
To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow:
Remorse and self-contempt shall cling to thee;
Hot shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.

XXXVIII.

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
Far from those carrion kites that scream below.
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.
Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of
shame.

XXXIX.

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
He hath awakened from the dream of life.
'Tis we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings. *We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living
clay.

XL.

He has outsoared the shadow of our night.
Envy and calumny, and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again.
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown grey in vain;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

XLI.

He lives, he wakes — 'tis Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais. — Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone!
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
Cease ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air
Which like a morning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

XLII.

He is made one with Nature. There is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird:
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own,
Which wields the world with never wearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

XLIII.

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely : he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull, dense world ; compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear ;
Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear ;
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the heavens' light.

XLIV.

The splendours of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not :
Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it, for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there,
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

XLV.

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
Far in the unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale, his solemn agony had not
Yet faded from him ; Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell, and as he lived and loved,
Sublimely mild, a spirit without spot,
Arose ; and Lucan, by his death approved ;—
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

XLVI.

And many more, whose names on earth are dark
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
"Thou art become as one of us," they cry;
"It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid an heaven of song.
Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper of our throng!"

XLVII.

Who mourns for Adonais? oh, come forth,
Fond wretch, and know thyself and him aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous earth;
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
Sate the void circumference: then shrink
Even to a point within our day and night;
And keep thy heart light, lest it make thee sink
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the
brink.

XLVIII.

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
Oh, not of him, but of our joy. 'Tis nought
That ages, empires, and religions, there
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
For such as he can lend — they borrow not
Glory from those who made the world their prey;
And he is gathered to the kings of thought
Who waged contention with their times' decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

XLIX.

Go thou to Rome — at once the paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness:
And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,
And flowering weeds and fragrant copses dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access,
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread,

L.

And grey walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.

LI.

Here pause. These graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
Its charge to each; and if the seal is set
Here on one fountain of a mourning mind,
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

LII.

The One remains, the many change and pass ;
Heaven's light for ever shines, earth's shadows fly ;
Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
Stains the white radiance of eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments. — Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek !
Follow where all is fled ! — Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

LIII.

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my heart ?
Thy hopes are gone before : from all things here
They have departed ; thou shouldst now depart !
A light is past from the revolving year,
And man, and woman ; and what still is dear
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
The soft sky smiles — the low wind whispers near :
'Tis Adonais calls ! Oh, hasten thither !
No more let life divide what death can join together.

LIV.

That light whose smile kindles the universe,
That beauty in which all things work and move,
That benediction which the eclipsing curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and sky and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV.

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
 Descends on me ; my spirit's bark is driven
 Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
 Whose sails were never to the tempest given ;
 The massy earth and sphered skies are riven !
 I am borne darkly, fearfully afar !
 Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of heaven,
 The soul of Adonais, like a star,
 Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.



NOTES.

THE AUTHOR.

Percy Bysshe Shelley was the son of Sir Timothy Shelley, and was born at Field Place, Sussex, August 4, 1792. At the age of eighteen he was sent to Oxford University, but having written and published a pamphlet in defence of atheism, he was expelled before completing half his course. In 1814 he wrote *Queen Mab*, his first long poem. This was followed in 1815 by *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude*, and in 1817 by *The Revolt of Islam*. In 1818 he went to Italy and resided successively in Rome, Venice, and Pisa. There he produced the most important of his works: the two dramas, *Prometheus Unbound* and *The Cenci*; also *The Witch of Atlas*, *Epipsychidion*, *Adonais*, and *Hellas*. On the 8th of April, 1822, he was drowned while attempting to cross the Gulf of Spezia in a boat. In compliance with the quarantine laws of Italy, his body was burned on the shore. His ashes were deposited in the Protestant cemetery at Rome, near the grave of Keats.

THE POEM.

Adonais was written at Pisa, Italy, in May, 1821. "There is much in *Adonais*," says Mrs. Shelley, "which seems now more applicable to Shelley himself than to the young and gifted poet whom he mourned. The poetic view he takes of death, and the lofty scorn he displays towards his calum-

niators, are as a prophecy on his own destiny when received among immortal names, and the poisonous breath of critics has vanished into emptiness before the fame he inherits."

"*Adonais* must rank among the most perfect of Shelley's poems for symmetry of design, united with rich elaboration of details," says Todhunter. "He has here done what Keats himself counselled him to do, — filled every rift of his subject with ore."

"It presents Shelley's qualities in a form of even and sustained beauty, brought within the sphere of the dullest apprehensions. Shelley dwells upon the *art* of the poem; and this, perhaps, is what at first sight will strike the student most."

R. H. Hutton describes the poem as "a shimmer of beautiful regret, full of arbitrary though harmonious and delicate fancies."

There is reason to believe that Shelley regarded *Adonais* as his masterpiece. "I confess," says he, "I should be surprised if that poem were born to an oblivion." "The *Adonais*," he writes to a friend, "is the least imperfect of my compositions." To another he says, "It is a highly wrought piece of art, and perhaps better, in point of composition, than anything I have written." To another, "It is absurd in any review to criticise *Adonais*, and still more to pretend that the verses are bad." And again, "I know what to think of *Adonais*, but what to think of those who confound it with the many bad poems of the day, I know not."

THE TITLE.

Adonais. This name was probably suggested to Shelley by Bion's *Lament for Adonis*, of which it is in some parts an imitation. "Dr. Furnivall has suggested to me," says Rossetti, "that Adonais is Shelley's variant of Adonias, the women's yearly mourning for Adonis" (see note 1, page 30).

Ἀστὴρ πρὶν κ. τ. λ. This distich from Plato is elsewhere translated by Shelley in the following lines *To Stella*: —

"Thou wert the Morning Star among the living,
Ere thy fair light had fled; —
Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving
New splendour to the dead."

THE INTRODUCTION.

John Keats died in February, 1821, — the day being given differently by different authors, as the 21st, 23d, 24th, or 27th, — and not on the 27th of December, 1820, as stated in Shelley's Preface. He was not what

we would call an intimate friend of Shelley's, nor had his earlier poems been at all acceptable to the latter. But his fragment of *Hyperion* had given great pleasure to Shelley, who declared that he considered it "as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years." It is not probable that the "savage criticism" of *Endymion* in the *Quarterly Review* did much, if anything, towards hastening the death of the young poet who was already predisposed to consumption.

"He was accompanied to Rome," says Shelley, in concluding his Preface, "and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, 'almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect, to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend.' Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from 'such stuff as dreams are made of.' His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career—may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!"

Of Shelley's Preface to the poem, I have given only a part, omitting that portion in which he launches into an invective against the critics in the *Quarterly Review*,—a paragraph which adds no lustre to its author's fame, and which can be of but little interest to the readers of *Adonais*. "The fact is," says Todhunter, "that this preface was a somewhat botched-up affair. It is evident from the first sentence, and the cancelled passages that remain, that Shelley intended to have written a more fitting introduction to the poem, vindicating Keats's claim to a place among the great poets of the day; and it is also evident that the story, so derogatory to Keats, of his having died of a criticism, threw a somewhat lurid light over his champion's imagination. The false story struck a false chord of feeling in Shelley's mind."

STANZA I.

1. Compare this line with the first line of Bion's *Lament for Adonis* (see pages 21 and 24). Also compare the whole of the first stanza of Mrs. Browning's version of the *Lament*, with the whole of this stanza.

STANZA II.

2. Where wert thou? See *The Sorrow of Daphnis*, 3; also *Lycidas*, 50-55, and note 3, page 14.—**mighty Mother.** Urania. Shelley addresses Urania as the heavenly Venus, the Aphrodite Urania or spirit of eternal

love and beauty. There were two Uranias, the Muse Urania and Aphrodite Urania. Shelley does not seem to have had in mind the exact distinction between them. Although in this passage and in some others which follow he clearly intends reference to the latter, he addresses her in the fourth stanza as "most musical of mourners," as if he meant the former. It is the Muse Urania whom Milton invokes in *Paradise Lost*, vii. 7:—

" Heavenly-born
Before the hills appear'd, or fountain flow'd,
Thou with eternal Wisdom didst converse.
Wisdom, thy sister, and with her didst play
In presence of the Almighty Father, pleas'd
With thy celestial song."

Tennyson, in *In Memoriam*, 37 (which see), also refers to the Muse. But in *The Princess*, to the Aphrodite Urania:—

" The seal was Cupid bent above a scroll,
And o'er his head Uranian Venus hung
And raised the blinding bandage from his eyes."

There is a great contrast between Urania, the patroness of spiritual love, and the sensuous Venus (Aphrodite Pandemos) of Bion's *Lament*, yet Shelley's imitation of the Greek idyl is very apparent.

3. **pierced by the shaft which flies in darkness.** Bion speaks of the thigh of Adonis "pierced by a tusk." The shaft which flies in darkness is death. In *Psalms* xci. 6, it is called "the pestilence that walketh in darkness." Some critics understand the allusion here to be to the savage attack made anonymously upon Keats in the *Quarterly Review*. But this view seems to be scarcely warranted by the context.

STANZA III.

2. **wake and weep.** Compare again with Bion's *Lament for Adonis*, "Sleep no more, Venus; rise, wretched goddess," etc. See also note 2, page 31. "A hostile reviewer," says Rossetti, "might have been expected to indulge in one of the most familiar of cheap jokes, and to say that Urania had naturally fallen asleep over Keats's poems; but I am not aware that any critic of *Adonais* did actually say this."

7. **amorous Deep.** Another metaphor meaning Death. Compare *Romeo and Juliet*, v. 3, 102:—

" Shall I believe
That unsubstantial Death is amorous,
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
Thee here in darkness to be his paramour ? "

Shelley may have in mind the line in Bion's *Lament for Adonis* (line 19, page 24), "Persephone does not release him," the amorous Persephone being the queen of the dead.

STANZA IV.

3. the Sire. John Milton, author of *Paradise Lost*.

9. the third among the sons of light. It is not entirely certain who would have been named by Shelley as the first and second, but perhaps the following passage from his *Defence of Poetry* will make it sufficiently clear: "Homer was the first and Dante the second epic poet; that is, the second epic poet, the series of whose creations bore a defined and intelligible relation to the knowledge and sentiment and religion of the age in which he lived, and of the ages which followed it, developing itself in correspondence with their development. . . . Milton was the third epic poet." A similar idea is expressed by Dryden:—

"Three poets in three distant ages born,
Greece, Italy, and England, did adorn.
The first in loftiness of thought surpass'd;
The next in majesty; in both the last.
The force of nature could no further go;
To make a third, she join'd the former two."

STANZA V.

Hales says: "This is a very obscure stanza. It seems to mean: not all poets have essayed such lofty flights as Milton, *i.e.* attempted Epic poetry; but some have wisely taken a lower level, *i.e.* attempted Lyric poetry, and are still remembered as Lyric poets, as, for instance, Gray or Burns; others, attempting a middle flight, have been cut off in the midst of their work, as Keats and Spenser, whom,—

"Ere he ended his melodious song
An host of angels flew the clouds among
And rapt this swan from his attentive mates
To make him one of their associates
In Heaven's faire quire."

Others yet live, of whom nothing definite can be said, *e.g.* Shelley himself, and Byron." To these we might add Wordsworth and Coleridge.

STANZA VI.

3. by some sad maiden cherished. See Keats's poem, *Isabella, or the Pot of Basil*:—

" And so she ever fed it with thin tears,
Whence thick, and green, and beautiful it grew,
So that it smelt more balmy than its peers
Of Basil-tufts in Florence."

9. **The broken lily.** Compare Shakespeare, *King Henry VIII.*,
v. 3:—

" A most unspotted lily shall she pass
To the ground, and all the world shall mourn her."

STANZA VII.

1. **high capital.** Rome. See Byron, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*,
iv. 78:—

" O Rome! my country! city of the soul!
 . . . Come and see
The cypress, hear the owl, and plod your way
O'er steps of broken thrones and temples, ye!
Whose agonies are evils of a day—
A world is at our feet as fragile as our clay."

—**the eternal.** The illustrious dead of mighty Rome, which is itself called the "eternal city."

7. **as if in dewy sleep he lay.** Compare with the *Lament for Adonis* (page 23): "And though a corpse he is beautiful, a beautiful corpse as it were sleeping." The resemblance of Death to Sleep is hinted at by Shelley in the opening lines of his first long poem, *Queen Mab*:—

" How wonderful is Death,—
Death and his brother Sleep!"

But this idea was probably suggested by the beautiful passage in Homer's *Iliad*, xiv., beginning thus: "Then Hera came to Lemnos, the city of godlike Thoas. There she met Sleep, the brother of Death," etc.

STANZA VIII.

3. **shadow of white Death.** So, in *Job* x. 21: "The land of darkness and the shadow of death"; and in *Psalms* xxiii. 4: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death." In the third line below, Shelley calls corruption the "eternal Hunger." The grave, according to Solomon (*Proverbs* xxx. 16), is the first of "three things that are never satisfied, yea, of four things that say not It is enough."—**His extreme way**, *i.e.* "Adonais's last journey."—**her**, *i.e.* corruption's.—**dim dwelling-place.** The grave.

STANZA IX.

3. **flocks.** Shelley here falls into the pastoral strain. Adonais, like Bion (see page 39) and Lycidas, becomes a shepherd, a keeper of flocks, a herdsman. The Dreams — Ministers of Thought — were Adonais's poetic imaginings. See Wordsworth, *Peele Castle*, etc. : —

"The light that never was on sea or land,
The consecration and the Poet's dream,"

STANZA X.

1. **And one.** Compare the ministration of the Dreams, as described in this and the following stanza, with the mourning of the Loves in the *Lament for Adonis* (page 24), ending with the sentence, "and another behind him is fanning Adonis with his wings."

3. **not dead.** Compare with *Lycidas*, 166; also with the *Mournfull Lay of Clorinda* : —

"Ah! no: it is not dead, ne can it die,
But lives for aie, in blisfull Paradise."

— **Lost Angel.** The faded dream. — **of a ruined Paradise.** Of the dead poet's mind.

9. **faded, like a cloud,** etc. See Keats's *Endymion* : —

"Therein
A melancholy spirit might win
Oblivion, and melt out his essence fine
Into the winds."

STANZA XI.

1. **starry dew.** It was formerly supposed that the dew was distilled from the stars. Compare this entire sentence with the *Lament for Adonis* (page 24) : "Another is carrying water in golden ewers, and a third is bathing his thighs."

3. **clipped her profuse locks.** So the Loves, weeping for Adonis, "had their locks shorn" for him. See page 24, also note 17, page 35. Accent the word *profuse* on the first syllable. — **The wreath.** This cannot mean a wreath made of the "profuse locks." Is it not rather the laurel wreath, meed of poets, which had fallen from his head and is now thrown aimlessly upon him? I hazard this as a conjecture.

7. **break her bow and winged reeds.** So of the Loves (see page 24), "one was trampling on his arrows, another on his bow, and another was breaking his well-feathered quiver." See note 18, page 35. Compare with the Countess of Pembroke's *Dolefull Lay of Clorinda* : —

"Breake now your gyrlonds, O ye shepheards lasses,
Sith the fair flowre which them adorn'd is gon."

—**stem.** Oppose; set over against.

9. barbed fire. The flaming tips of the winged reeds mentioned above. Figuratively, the poetic fire of the winged messengers of thought.

—**frozen cheek.** See "frozen tears," only four lines above.

STANZA XII.

1. splendour. Poetic inspiration, or Dream.

STANZA XIII.

1. Others came. Compare with the *Sorrow of Daphnis*, page 10, line 2, the passage beginning, "Then came those who tend the kine," etc. Also with *Lament for Bion*, page 40, line 9, beginning, "Apollo himself lamented," etc. Also with *Lycidas*, the passages referring to the coming of Triton, Camus, St. Peter, etc. See note 8, page 16.

STANZA XIV.

4. her hair unbound. It is questionable whether Shelley really meant anything by the hair of Morning, or whether this passage is simply an imitation of the lines in the *Lament for Adonis* (page 25):—

"And the poor Aphrodite with tresses unbound,
All dishevell'd," etc.

Could he have meant the morning mists, or foggy exhalations, which, while they ought to have fallen upon the ground in the form of dew, remained suspended in the air, and dimmed the light of the sun's rays? In representing the grief of inanimate nature,—morning, thunder, the ocean, echo, etc.,—for the dead Adonais, Shelley but imitates the older poets. See the *Lament for Adonis*, page 22, where the mountains, the rivers, and the oaks are said to weep; also the *Lament for Bion*, page 39, where the mourners are the rivers, the groves, and the flowers.

STANZA XV.

1. lost Echo. Compare with Moschus, *Lament for Bion*: "And Echo in the rocks laments that thou art silent," etc. (see page 40). Also with *Adonis*, page 22: "And Echo cried in response," etc.

5. bell at closing day. See Gray's *Elegy*, 1; also note 1, page 107. In this stanza the poet succeeds in presenting to the mind a true picture of sounds.

STANZA XVI.

1. threw down her kindling buds. See *Lament for Bion*, line 15, page 40. Also note 16, page 34, and *Lycidas*, 134, and the account of Balder on page 30.

5. Hyacinth. See note 2, page 44. — Narcissus. Ovid relates how Narcissus fell in love with his own shadow reflected in a fountain, and, having pined away because he could not kiss it, was changed into the flower that bears his name. Shelley here falls into some confusion, mixing up in the same connection references to both the flowers themselves and the mythological personages from whom they derived their names.

STANZA XVII.

1. lorn nightingale. See Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale* : —

"Forlorn! the word is like a bell
To toll me back from thee to my sole self."

See *Lament for Bion*, 11, also note 3, page 45, and note 56 on "the pore turtle," page 71.

7. Albion wails for thee. See the *Mourning Muse of Thestylis* : "Thou wouldst have heard the cry that wofull England made." See also *Lament for Bion* : "Every famous city laments thee, and every town." Albion is the ancient name for England, so called from the early inhabitants, the Albiones. An old legend relates that it was so called after Albion, the giant son of Neptune, who was its discoverer and first king. Another explanation of the name is that it is derived from Latin *albus*, white, with reference to the white chalk cliffs on the southern coast, some of which are visible from France. It is a wide stretch of the imagination to suppose that England really lamented the death of Keats.

7. curse of Cain. See *Genesis* iv. 11. See also Shelley's Preface to the poem, where in reference to the supposed author of the criticism in the *Quarterly Review*, he exclaims : "Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none." See also *Lament for Bion* : "What mortal was so cruel that he could mix poison for thee?"

STANZA XVIII.

1. Compare this and the following stanza with the *Lament for Bion*, lines 8-15, page 43. Also with the *Shepherds Calender*, November : —

" Whence is it, that the flouret of the field doth fade,
 And lyeth buried long in Winters bale;
 Yet, soone as Spring his mantle hath displayde,
 It floureth fresh as it should never fayle?
 But thing of earth that is of most availe
 As vertues branch and beauties bud,
 Reliven not for any good."

—But grief returns with the revolving year. See the *Lament for Adonis*: "Thou must wail again, and weep again next year." Shelley now goes on to describe the coming of spring, already alluded to in XVI., above.—**brere.** Briar.—**God dawned on Chaos.** See *Genesis* i.

STANZA XX.

3. Like incarnations of the stars. See Longfellow's poem on *Flowers*, 5:—

" Stars they are wherein we read our history,

 Everywhere about us they are glowing—
 Some like stars, to tell us Spring is born."

The literal meaning of *incarnation* is a clothing or embodiment in flesh. Shelley certainly did not mean that flowers are like stars clothed in flesh, but rather that they are like stars brought down to earth.—**Nought we know dies.** Forms and conditions change, but nothing is annihilated. Even "the leprous corpse"—the loathsome body of decay—"touched by this spirit tender," of Spring and love's delight, "exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath." Shall then the mind alone—"that alone which knows"—perish, while matter continues to exist?—

" The stream flows,
 The wind blows,
 The cloud fleets,
 The heart beats,
 Nothing will die,
 Nothing will die;
 All things will change
 Through eternity."—*Tennyson*.

8. sightless. Viewless, invisible, unseen. As in *Hamlet*, i. 5:—

" Wherever in your sightless substances
 You wait on Nature's mischief!"

—**th' intense atom.** The mind; the intellectual part of our being. The question is still implied in this sentence, as, "Shall th' intense atom glow?" etc.

STANZA XXI.

1. all we loved of him. His mind; his real self as apart from his body. — who lends what life must borrow. Death is the great fact. Everything is derived from it, and must return to it again. "Dust thou art and unto dust thou must return."

STANZA XXII.

1. childless Mother. Urania. See note 2, above. Compare this stanza with the opening lines in *Lament for Adonis*.

4. a wound more fierce. See *Lament for Adonis*, iii. 3 (page 25). Observe the appropriateness here of these words spoken by Misery: —

"Shadow-vested Misery
Coy, unwilling, silent bride,
Mourning in thy robe of pride,
Desolution deified." — *Shelley, Misery*.

8. snake Memory. Shelley had a peculiar sympathy for snakes, and one of the pets of his childhood was a harmless old serpent that had long frequented his father's garden, and was finally accidentally killed by the gardener's scythe. No disagreeable meaning must therefore be applied to the expression "snake memory."

STANZA XXIII.

1. She rose, etc. Compare this stanza with *Lament for Adonis*, iii. 5-15 (page 26). This and the following stanzas describe the hastening of Urania from her own "secret Paradise" to the death chamber.

STANZA XXIV.

5. Palms of her tender feet. Soles. This use of the word *palms* is peculiar to Shelley: —

"Our feet now, every palm,
Are sandalled with calm." — *Prometheus Unbound*, iv.

8. blood like the young tears of May. See *Lament for Adonis*, page 17, line 23.

STANZA XXVI.

1. "Stay yet a while," etc. Compare this stanza with the *Lament for Adonis*, v. (page 26), beginning with, —

"Stay, Adonis! unhappy one, stay!"

3. **heartless breast.** That is, breast from which the heart has been crushed by sorrow.

9. **I am chained to Time**, etc. Compare with *Lament for Adonis*, page 23: "Wretched I live, and am a goddess, and cannot follow thee."

STANZA XXVII.

4. **unpastured dragon.** The savage critic. So Venus to Adonis: "Nay, why, rash one, didst thou hunt?"

6. **Wisdom the mirrored shield.** The shield of discretion which, while protecting from assault, shows the weak points of the enemy. The reference is probably to the shield of Perseus, into which he looked while attacking the Gorgon.—**scorn the spear.** The magic spear, familiar in both ancient and mediæval romances, whose lightest touch overcomes the enemy.

9. **monsters of life's waste.** They are specified in the following stanza. The poet thus characterizes the critics whose adverse judgments he believed to have hastened Keats's death.

STANZA XXVIII.

7. **The Pythian of the age.** Byron. The one arrow which he sped was the poem, *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, in which he gave answer to the writers who had severely criticized his own early poetry. Apollo was called the Pythian because he attacked and slew the huge serpent Python which infested the neighborhood of Krissa. Hence the application of the title to Byron, who made an onslaught upon the serpents of the literary press. Shelley has probably in mind the famous statue of Apollo Belvedere, representing the god in the act of shooting the Python with an arrow from his bow. Byron had just written of this statue:—

"Or view the Lord of the unerring bow,
The god of life, and poesy, and light—
The sun in human limbs arrayed, and brow
All radiant from his triumph in the fight.

Childe Harold, iv. 161.

STANZA XXX.

2. Compare this line with *Lycidas*, 104, 105. The "uncouth swain" (*Lycidas*, 192) had also a mantle—"blue." The mountain shepherds, as explained in the lines which follow, are the poet friends of Keats. Observe the recurrence again to the imagery of pastoral poetry.

3. **Pilgrim of Eternity.** Byron was so called because of his famous

poem, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, of which he himself was the acknowledged hero.

7. In sorrow. Byron does not seem to have felt much sorrow for Keats. This is what he wrote about his death :—

“ John Keats—who was killed off by one critique
 Just as he really promised something great,
 If not intelligible—without Greek
 Contrived to talk about the Gods of late,
 Much as they might have been supposed to speak.
 Poor fellow! his was an untoward fate!
 'Tis strange the mind, that fiery particle,
 Should let itself be snuff'd out by an article.” — *Don Juan*, xi.

And again :—

“ ‘ Who killed John Keats?’
 ‘ I,’ says the Quarterly,
 So savage and Tartarly;
 ‘Twas one of my feats.’ ”

7. *Ierne*. Ireland. The sweetest lyrist was Thomas Moore, author of *Irish Melodies*, *National Airs*, etc. By “her saddest wrong,” Shelley probably refers to the suppression of the rebellion of 1803. See many of the songs in the above-mentioned collections. “Whether Moore ever showed the faintest interest in or grief for Keats, I know not.” — *W. M. Rossetti*.

STANZA XXXI.

1. *one frail Form*. The reference in this and two stanzas following is to Shelley himself. — *Actæon-like*. Actæon was a huntsman, who, having accidentally surprised Artemis bathing, was changed by that goddess into a stag, and was torn to pieces by his own hounds. “By this expression,” says Rossetti, “Shelley apparently means that he had over-boldly tried to fathom the depths of things and of mind, but, baffled and dismayed in the effort, suffered, as a man living among men, by the very tension and vividness of his thoughts, and their daring in expression.” Shelley himself says: “As a man I shrink from notice and regard; the ebb and flow of the world vexes me: I desire to be left in peace. Persecution, contumely, and calumny have been heaped upon me in profuse measure.”

STANZA XXXIII.

9. *herd-abandoned deer*. See *Hamlet*, iii. 2 :—

“ Why, let the stricken deer go weep,
 The hart ungalled play;

For some must watch, while some must sleep —
So runs the world away."

Compare also with *Merchant of Venice*, iv. 1: —

"I am a tainted wether of the flock,
Meetest for death."

Pansies represent thought or memory; violets, modesty; cypress, mourning; ivy, friendship.

STANZA XXXIV.

3. **wept his own.** Was this a prediction of Shelley's own early death? Keats died at the age of twenty-five. The next year Shelley was drowned at the age of thirty. The latter had more than once predicted that he would die young.—**an unknown land.** A land unknown to the Greek goddess Urania Aphrodite, — a *new sorrow* to her also.

9. **like Cain's or Christ's.** Branded like Cain's,—the mark of reprobation; bleeding like Christ's,—the mark of persecution. This is a possible explanation of this phrase, but it is hard to understand Shelley's exact meaning. "The coupling together of the names of Cain and Christ in this stanza," says Rossetti, "was not likely to conciliate antagonists; and indeed one may safely surmise that it was done by Shelley more for the rather wanton purpose of exasperating them than with any other object."

STANZA XXXV.

1. **What softer voice.** John Severn was the only one of Keats's friends who was actually present at the death of Keats. Were it not for a passage in Shelley's Preface to this poem (quoted on page 136), we would suppose that Severn's was the "softer voice" referred to here. The stanza, however, doubtless relates to Leigh Hunt, who, although far from unfriendly to Keats, was certainly not the ardent teacher, lover, and admirer of the dead poet that he is here represented to be.

STANZA XXXVI.

1. **has drunk poison.** Compare with *The Lament for Bion*, line 19, page 43: "Poison came, Bion, to thy mouth," etc.—**deaf and viperous murderer.** See extract from Preface, page 136, above.

STANZA XXXVIII.

5. **the pure spirit shall flow, etc.** The pantheistic doctrine that all spiritual existences are finally reunited with universal and eternal essence of God. As an opposite theory, read *In Memoriam*, xlv.

STANZA XXXIX.

1. **he is not dead.** See *Lycidas*, 166. Also *The Dolefull Lay of Clorinda* — the passage already quoted on page 140, above. In this stanza, as well as in the preceding, we find the statement of Shelley's belief regarding the immortality of the soul, — "a belief," says Todhunter, "which was a faith rather than a creed." A few passages in other poems of his give further expression to the same idea. See his lines, *To William Shelley*: —

"Thy little footsteps on the sands
Of a remote and lonely shore;
The twinkling of thine infant hands,
Where now the worm will feed no more."

Human life he represents as a dream. The state which we call death is the true existence. "We decay like corpses in a charnel house." But when we wake from this "mad trance," we shall pass to the more substantial state, to which Adonais (as he says in the next stanza) has already departed. So Plato, *Phædo*, 59: "Every living thing comes from a dead thing. For if the soul exist before our birth, and if when it passes into life it cannot come from any other quarter than from death and the state of the dead, it is inevitable that it must exist after we are dead, since it is again to come into life."

STANZA XLI.

2. **young Dawn.** See stanza XIV., above, and the note on the same.

STANZA XLII.

1. **made one with Nature.** This is a statement, in another form, of the pantheistic conception already enlarged upon in stanza XXXVIII. Compare again with *In Memoriam*, xlv.

4. **a presence.** Compare with Wordsworth's *Intimations of Immortality*, viii. 13: —

"Thou, over whom thy immortality
Broods like the day, a master o'er a slave,
A presence which is not to be put by."

STANZA XLV.

1. **The inheritors of unfulfilled renown.** "We are to understand (but Shelley is too great a master to formulate it in words) that Keats, as an 'inheritor of unfulfilled renown,' — *i.e.* a great intellect cut off by death before its maturest fruits could be produced, — has now arrived among his compeers: they rise from their thrones to welcome him. In

this connection Shelley chooses to regard Keats as still a living spiritual personality — not simply as ‘made one with Nature.’” — *Rossetti*.

3. **Chatterton.** Thomas Chatterton was born in 1752, and died in 1770, aged seventeen. Wordsworth refers to him as —

“the marvellous boy
The sleepless soul that perished in his pride.”

Resolution and Independence.

And Keats addresses him thus: —

“Thou art among the stars
Of highest heaven: to the rolling spheres
Thou sweetly singest: nought thy hymning mars,
Above the ingrate world and human fears.”

5. **Sidney.** Sir Philip Sidney died at the age of thirty-two. See Spenser’s *Astrophel*, page 51; also note page 66.

8. **Lucan.** Marcus Annæus Lucanus, commonly called Lucan, was born in Spain, A.D. 39; he was compelled to drink poison in 65, and died, aged twenty-six years, being condemned by Nero as connected with the conspiracy of Piso.

STANZA XLVI.

6. **yon kingless sphere**, etc. The inheritors of unfulfilled renown are speaking. They inform Adonais that one of the heavenly spheres has remained kingless until now, and silent alone in the heaven of song, waiting for his coming. He is the only person worthy to occupy its “winged throne,” the only one who can wake it into music. The beautiful poetic idea of the music of the spheres is prominent here. It was Plato who taught that a siren sits on each planet, carolling a song of her own which harmonizes with those sung by the other seven. Job (xxxviii. 7) speaks of the time “when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy.” See also Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice* v. i.

STANZA XLVII.

1. **Who mourns for Adonais**, etc. That is, let any one who mourns for Adonais come forth and reason upon the matter. Let him consider the magnitude of the earth, the vastness of the universe, and his own insignificance. But let him not entirely lose heart in this contemplation, or through despair be “lured to the brink” between life and death.

STANZA XLVIII.

1. **Or go to Rome.** The address is still to the mourner. — Oh, not of him. He is occupying his celestial sphere in company with the other

"inheritors of unfulfilled renown." Only his body and our joy lie buried at Rome.

STANZA XLIX.

7. **a slope of green access.** The English burying-ground wherein Keats was interred, and where soon afterwards the ashes of Shelley himself were placed.

STANZA L.

3. **one keen pyramid.** The pyramid or tomb of Caius Cestius, near which Keats was buried. See Preface to the poem. Of Caius Cestius, nothing is really known except that the peculiar pyramidal monument known by his name was erected to perpetuate his memory.

7. **newer band.** The Protestants for whom the cemetery was set apart.

STANZA LI.

1. **these graves are all too young.** The cemetery had been but lately established. Rossetti says: "No doubt Shelley is here thinking in especial of his own bitterly mourned infant son William, buried in this ground not two years before." See quotation on stanza XXXIX., above.

STANZA LII.

1. **The one.** The universal Mind, the Eternal (stanza XXXVIII.), Nature. — **the many.** The individuals, the human beings, who are finally "made one with Nature."

3. **Life, like a dome, etc.** This is a beautiful simile which will repay careful study.

STANZA LV.

"The last lines of *Adonais* might be read as a prophecy of his own death by drowning. The frequent recurrence of this thought in his poetry is, to say the least, singular." — *J. A. Symonds*.

"The concluding stanzas have a solemn intensity of inspiration which produces a sensation of awe in the reader's mind. A supernatural power seems really and sensibly to work in the poet's soul, and hurry it away into unknown regions of thought which words cannot illumine. If Shelley's spirit, at least, be not an immortal thing, life must be a mockery, and we mortals indeed the fools of time." — *John Todhunter*.

IN MEMORIAM

A. H. H. — Obiit MDCCCXXXIII

By Alfred Tennyson

1849

The poem entitled In Memoriam is a monument erected by friendship to the memory of a gifted son of the historian Hallam. It is divided into a number of cabinet-like compartments, which, with fine and delicate shades of difference, exhibit the various phases through which the bereaved spirit passes from the first shock of despair, dull, hopeless misery and rebellion, up to the dawn of hope, acquiescent trust, and even calm happiness again. In the meanwhile many a question has been solved, which can only suggest itself when suffering forces the soul to front the realities of our mysterious existence; such as: Is there indeed a life to come? And if there is, will it be a conscious life? Shall I know that myself? Will there be mutual recognition? continuance of attachments? Shall friend meet friend, and brother brother, as friends and brothers? Or, again: How comes it that one so gifted was taken away so early, in the maturity of his powers, just at the moment when they seemed about to become available to mankind? What means all this, and is there not something wrong? Is the law of Creation Love indeed? By slow degrees, all these doubts, and worse, are answered; not as a philosopher would answer them, nor as a theologian, or a metaphysician, but as it is the duty of a poet to reply, by intuitive faculty, in strains in which Imagination predominates over Thought and Memory. . . . To a coarser class of minds In Memoriam appears too melancholy: one long monotone of grief. It is simply one of the most victorious songs that ever poet chanted; with the mysterious undertone, no doubt, of sadness which belongs to all human joy, in front of the mysteries of death and sorrow; but that belongs to every true note of human triumph except a Bacchanalian drinking song. And that it should predominate in a monumental record is not particularly unnatural. — F. W. ROBERTSON.

In Memoriam.

ARTHUR HENRY HALLAM.

OBIIT MDCCCXXXIII.



Strong Son of God, immortal Love
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove;

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
Thou madest Life in man and brute;
Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
Thou madest man, he knows not why;
He thinks he was not made to die;
And thou hast made him: thou art just.

Thou seemest human and divine,
The highest, holiest manhood, thou:
Our wills are ours, we know not how;
Our wills are ours to make them thine.

Our little systems have their day;
They have their day and cease to be:
They are but broken lights of thee,
And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

We have but faith : we cannot know :
 For knowledge is of things we see ;
 And yet we trust it comes from thee,
 A beam in darkness : let it grow.

Let knowledge grow from more to more,
 But more of reverence in us dwell ;
 That mind and soul, according well,
 May make one music as before,

But vaster. We are fools and slight ;
 We mock thee when we do not fear :
 But help thy foolish ones to bear ;
 Help thy vain worlds to bear thy light.

Forgive what seemed my sin in me ;
 What seemed my worth since I began ;
 For merit lives from man to man,
 And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
 Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
 I trust he lives in thee, and there
 I find him worthier to be loved.

Forgive these wild and wandering cries,
 Confusions of a wasted youth ;
 Forgive them where they fail in truth,
 And in thy wisdom make me wise.

1849.

I.

I held it truth, with him who sings
 To one clear harp in divers tones,
 That men may rise on stepping-stones
 Of their dead selves to higher things.

But who shall so forecast the years
 And find in loss a gain to match ?

Or reach a hand thro' time to catch
The far-off interest of tears?

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drowned,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss :
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Than that the victor Hours should scorn
The long result of love, and boast,
"Behold the man that loved and lost,
But all he was is overworn."

II.

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock ;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom :

And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

III.

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
O sweet and bitter in a breath,
What whispers from thy lying lip?

"The stars," she whispers, "blindly run;
A web is wov'n across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun:

"And all the phantom, Nature stands —
With all the music in her tone,
A hollow echo of my own, —
A hollow form with empty hands."

And shall I take a thing so blind,
Embrace her as my natural good;
Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
Upon the threshold of the mind?

IV.

To Sleep I give my powers away;
My will is bondsman to the dark;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say:

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
That thou shouldst fail from thy desire,
Who scarcely darest to inquire,
"What is it makes me beat so low?"

Something it is which thou hast lost,
Some pleasure from thine early years.

Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost !

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
All night below the darkened eyes :
With morning wakes the will, and cries,
"Thou shalt not be the fool of loss."

V.

I sometimes hold it half a sin
To put in words the grief I feel ;
For words, like Nature, half reveal
And half conceal the Soul within.

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
A use in measured language lies ;
The sad mechanic exercise,
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

In words, like weeds, I'll wrap me o'er,
Like coarsest clothes against the cold ;
But that large grief which these enfold
Is given in outline and no more.

VI.

One writes, that "Other friends remain,"
That "Loss is common to the race," —
And common is the commonplace,
And vacant chaff well meant for grain.

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more :
Too common ! Never morning wore
To evening, but some heart did break.

O father, wheresoe'er thou be,
Who pledgest now thy gallant son ;
A shot, ere half thy draught be done,
Hath still'd the life that beat from thee.

O mother, praying God will save
Thy sailor, — while thy head is bowed,
His heavy-shotted hammock-shroud,
Drops in his vast and wandering grave.

Ye know no more than I who wrought
At that last hour to please him well ;
Who mused on all I had to tell,
And something written, something thought ;

Expecting still his advent home ;
And ever met him on his way
With wishes, thinking, here to-day,
Or here to-morrow will he come.

Oh, somewhere, meek unconscious dove,
That sittest ranging golden hair ;
And glad to find thyself so fair,
Poor child, that waitest for thy love !

For now her father's chimney glows
In expectation of a guest ;
And thinking, " This will please him best,"
She takes a ribbon or a rose ;

For he will see them on to-night ;
And with the thought her color burns ;
And, having left the glass, she turns
Once more to set a ringlet right ;

And, even when she turned, the curse
Had fallen, and her future lord
Was drowned in passing thro' the ford,
Or killed in falling from his horse.

O what to her shall be the end?
And what to me remains of good?
To her, perpetual maidenhood,
And unto me no second friend.

VII.

Dark house, by which once more I stand
Here in the long unlovely street,
Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasped no more,—
Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
And like a guilty thing I creep
At earliest morning to the door.

He is not here; but far away
The noise of life begins again,
And ghastly thro' the drizzling rain
On the bald street breaks the blank day.

VIII.

A happy lover who has come
To look on her that loves him well,
Who 'lights and rings the gateway bell,
And learns her gone and far from home;

He saddens, all the magic light
Dies off at once from bower and hall,

And all the place is dark, and all
The chambers emptied of delight :

So find I every pleasant spot
In which we two were wont to meet,
The field, the chamber, and the street,
For all is dark where thou art not.

Yet as that other, wandering there
In those deserted walks, may find
A flower beat with rain and wind,
Which once she fostered up with care ;

So seems it in my deep regret,
O my forsaken heart, with thee
And this poor flower of poesy
Which little cared for fades not yet.

But since it pleased a vanished eye,
I go to plant it on his tomb,
That if it can it there may bloom,
Or dying, there at least may die.

IX.

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
Sailest the placid ocean-plains
With my lost Arthur's loved remains,
Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
In vain ; a favorable speed
Ruffle thy mirrored mast, and lead
Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
As our pure love, thro' early light
Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above ;
Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow ;
Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
My friend, the brother of my love ;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
Till all my widowed race be run ;
Dear as the mother to the son,
More than my brothers are to me.

x.

I hear the noise about thy keel ;
I hear the bell struck in the night ;
I see the cabin-window bright ;
I see the sailor at the wheel.

Thou bringest the sailor to his wife,
And travelled men from foreign lands ;
And letters unto trembling hands ;
And, thy dark freight, a vanished life.

So bring him : we have idle dreams :
This look of quiet flatters thus
Our home-bred fancies : oh to us,
The fools of habit, sweeter seems

To rest beneath the clover sod,
That takes the sunshine and the rains,
Or where the kneeling hamlet drains
The chalice of the grapes of God ;

Than if with thee the roaring wells
Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine ;
And hands so often clasped in mine,
Should toss with tangle and with shells.

XI.

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only thro' the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground :

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
And on these dews that drench the furze,
And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold :

Calm and still light on yon great plain
That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main :

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
These leaves that redden to the fall ;
And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair :

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
And waves that sway themselves in rest,
And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

XII.

Lo as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' heaven a tale of woe,

Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings ;

Like her I go ; I cannot stay ;
I leave this mortal ark behind,
A weight of nerves without a mind,
And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
And reach the glow of southern skies,
And see the sails at distance rise,
And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying : " Comes he thus, my friend ?
Is this the end of all my care ? "
And circle moaning in the air :
" Is this the end ? Is this the end ? "

And forward dart again, and play
About the prow, and back return
To where the body sits, and learn,
That I have been an hour away.

XIII.

Tears of the widower, when he sees
A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
Her place is empty, fall like these ;

Which weep a loss forever new,
A void where heart on heart reposed ;
And, where warm hands have prest and closed,
Silence, till I be silent too.

Which weep the comrade of my choice,
An awful thought, a life removed,
The human-hearted man I loved,
A Spirit, not a breathing voice.

Come Time, and teach me, many years,
I do not suffer in a dream ;
For now so strange do these things seem,
Mine eyes have leisure for their tears ;

My fancies time to rise on wing,
And glance about the approaching sails,
As tho' they brought but merchants' bales,
And not the burden that they bring.

XIV.

If one should bring me this report,
That thou hadst touched the land to-day,
And I went down unto the quay,
And found thee lying in the port ;

And standing, muffled round with woe,
Should see thy passengers in rank
Come stepping lightly down the plank,
And beckoning unto those they know ;

And if along with these should come
The man I held as half-divine ;
Should strike a sudden hand in mine,
And ask a thousand things of home ;

And I should tell him all my pain,
And how my life had drooped of late,
And he should sorrow o'er my state
And marvel what possessed my brain ;

And I perceived no touch of change,
No hint of death in all his frame,
But found him all in all the same,
I should not feel it to be strange.

XV.

To-night the winds begin to rise
And roar from yonder dropping day ;
The last red leaf is whirled away,
The rooks are blown about the skies ;

The forest cracked, the waters curled,
The cattle huddled on the lea ;
And wildly dashed on tower and tree
The sunbeam strikes along the world :

And but for fancies, which aver
That all thy motions gently pass
Athwart a plane of molten glass,
I scarce could brook the strain and stir

That makes the barren branches loud ;
And but for fear it is not so,
The wild unrest that lives in woe
Would dote and pore on yonder cloud

That rises upward always higher,
And onward drags a laboring breast,
And topples round the dreary west,
A looming bastion fringed with fire.

XVI.

What words are these have fall'n from me ?
Can calm despair and wild unrest

Be tenants of a single breast,
Or sorrow such a changeling be ?

Or doth she only seem to take
The touch of change in calm or storm ;
But knows no more of transient form
In her deep self, than some dead lake

That holds the shadow of a lark
Hung in the shadow of a heaven ?
Or has the shock, so harshly given,
Confused me like the unhappy bark

That strikes by night a craggy shelf,
And staggers blindly ere she sink ?
And stunned me from my power to think
And all my knowledge of myself ;

And made me that delirious man
Whose fancy fuses old and new,
And flashes into false and true,
And mingles all without a plan ?

XVII.

Thou comest, much wept for : such a breeze
Compelled thy canvas, and my prayer
Was as the whisper of an air
To breathe thee over lonely seas.

For I in spirit saw thee move
Thro' circles of the bounding sky,
Week after week : the days go by :
Come quick, thou bringest all I love.

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,
My blessing, like a line of light,
Is on the waters day and night,
And like a beacon guards thee home.

So may whatever tempest mars
Mid-ocean, spare thee, sacred bark ;
And balmy drops in summer dark
Slide from the bosom of the stars.

So kind an office hath been done,
Such precious relics brought by thee ;
The dust of him I shall not see
Till all my widowed race be run.

XVIII.

'Tis well ; 'tis something ; we may stand
Where he in English earth is laid,
And from his ashes may be made
The violet of his native land.

'Tis little ; but it looks in truth
As if the quiet bones were blest
Among familiar names to rest
And in the places of his youth.

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head
That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
And come, whatever loves to weep,
And hear the ritual of the dead.

Ah yet, ev'n yet, if this might be,
I, falling on his faithful heart,
Would breathing thro' his lips impart
The life that almost dies in me ;

That dies not, but endures with pain,
And slowly forms the firmer mind,
Treasuring the look it cannot find,
The words that are not heard again.

XIX.

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darkened heart that beat no more ;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills ;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hushed nor moved along,
And hushed my deepest grief of all,
When filled with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls ;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.

XX.

The lesser griefs that may be said,
That breathe a thousand tender vows,
And but as servants in a house
Where lies the master newly dead ;

Who speak their feeling as it is,
And weep the fulness from the mind :

“It will be hard,” they say, “to find
Another service such as this.”

My lighter moods are like to these,
That out of words a comfort win ;
But there are other griefs within,
And tears that at their fountain freeze.

For by the hearth the children sit
Cold in that atmosphere of Death,
And scarce endure to draw the breath,
Or like to noiseless phantoms flit :

But open converse there is none,
So much the vital spirits sink
To see the vacant chair, and think,
“How good ! how kind ! and he is gone.”

XXI.

I sing to him that rests below,
And, since the grasses round me wave,
I take the grasses of the grave,
And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
And sometimes harshly will he speak :
“This fellow would make weakness weak,
And melt the waxen hearts of men.”

Another answers, “Let him be,
He loves to make parade of pain,
That with his piping he may gain
The praise that comes to constancy.”

A third is wroth, "Is this an hour
For private sorrow's barren song,
When more and more the people throng
The chairs and thrones of civil power?

"A time to sicken and to swoon,
When Science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon?"

Behold, ye speak an idle thing :
Ye never knew the sacred dust :
I do but sing because I must,
And pipe but as the linnets sing :

And one is glad ; her note is gay,
For now her little ones have ranged ;
And one is sad ; her note is changed,
Because her brood is stol'n away.

XXII.

The path by which we twain did go,
Which led by tracts that pleased us well,
Thro' four sweet years arose and fell,
From flower to flower, from snow to snow :

And we with singing cheered the way,
And, crowned with all the season lent,
From April on to April went,
And glad at heart from May to May :

But where the path we walked began
To slant the fifth autumnal slope,
As we descended following Hope,
There sat the Shadow feared of man ;

Who broke our fair companionship,
And spread his mantle dark and cold,
And wrapt thee formless in the fold,
And dulled the murmur on thy lip,

And bore thee where I could not see
Nor follow, tho' I walk in haste,
And think, that somewhere in the waste
The Shadow sits and waits for me.

XXIII.

Now, sometimes in my sorrow shut,
Or breaking into song by fits,
Alone, alone, to where he sits,
The Shadow cloaked from head to foot,

Who keeps the keys of all the creeds,
I wander, often falling lame,
And looking back to whence I came,
Or on to where the pathway leads ;

And crying : " How changed from where it ran
Thro' lands where not a leaf was dumb :
But all the lavish hills would hum
The murmur of a happy Pan :

" When each by turns was guide to each,
And Fancy light from Fancy caught,
And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought
Ere Thought could wed itself with Speech ;

" And all we met was fair and good,
And all was good that Time could bring,
And all the secret of the Spring
Moved in the chambers of the blood ;

“And many an old philosophy
On Argive heights divinely sang,
And round us all the thicket rang
To many a flute of Arcady.”

XXIV.

And was the day of my delight
As pure and perfect as I say ?
The very source and fount of day
Is dash'd with wandering isles of night.

If all was good and fair we met,
This earth had been the paradise
It never looked to human eyes
Since Adam left his garden yet.

And is it that the haze of grief
Makes former gladness loom so great ?
To lowness of the present state,
That sets the past in this relief ?

Or that the past will always win
A glory from its being far ;
And orb into the perfect star
We saw not, when we moved therein ?

XXV.

I know that this was life — the track
Whereon with equal feet we fared ;
And then, as now, the day prepared
The daily burden for the back.

But this it was that made me move
As light as carrier-birds in air ;

I loved the weight I had to bear,
Because it needed help of Love :
Nor could I weary, heart or limb,
When mighty Love would cleave in twain
The lading of a single pain,
And part it, giving half to him.

XXVI.

Still onward winds the dreary way ;
I with it ; for I long to prove
No lapse of moons can canker Love,
Whatever fickle tongues may say.
And if that eye which watches guilt
And goodness, and hath power to see
Within the green the mouldered tree,
And towers fall'n as soon as built —
Oh, if indeed that eye foresee
Or see (in Him is no before)
In more of life true life no more,
And Love the indifference to be,
Then might I find, ere yet the morn
Breaks hither over Indian seas,
That Shadow waiting with the keys,
To shroud me from my proper scorn.

XXVII.

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods :

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfettered by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes ;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth,
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth ;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate'er befall ;
I feel it, when I sorrow most ;
'Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

XXVIII.

The time draws near the birth of Christ :
The moon is hid ; the night is still ;
The Christmas bells from hill to hill
Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,
From far and near, on mead and moor,
Swell out and fail, as if a door
Were shut between me and the sound :

Each voice four changes on the wind,
That now dilate, and now decrease,
Peace and good-will, good-will and peace,
Peace and good-will, to all mankind.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wished no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again :

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controlled me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touched with joy,
The merry, merry bells of Yule.

XXIX.

With such compelling cause to grieve
As daily vexes household peace,
And chains regret to his decease,
How dare we keep our Christmas-eve;

Which brings no more a welcome guest.
To enrich the threshold of the night
With showered largess of delight,
In dance and song and game and jest.

Yet go, and while the holly boughs
Entwine the cold baptismal font,
Make one wreath more for Use and Wont,
That guard the portals of the house;

Old sisters of a day gone by,
Gray nurses, loving nothing new;
Why should they miss their yearly due
Before their time? They too will die.

XXX.

With trembling fingers did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth;
A rainy cloud possessed the earth,
And sadly fell our Christmas-eve.

At our old pastimes in the hall
We gambolled, making vain pretence
Of gladness, with an awful sense
Of one mute shadow watching all.

We paused : the winds were in the beech :
We heard them sweep the winter land ;
And in a circle hand-in-hand
Sat silent, looking each at each.

Then echo-like our voices rang ;
We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
A merry song we sang with him
Last year : impetuously we sang :

We ceased : a gentler feeling crept
Upon us : surely rest is meet :
" They rest," we said, " their sleep is sweet,"
And silence followed, and we wept.

Our voices took a higher range ;
Once more we sang : " They do not die
Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
Nor change to us, although they change ;

" Rapt from the fickle and the frail
With gathered power, yet the same,
Pierces the keen seraphic flame ,
From orb to orb, from veil to veil."

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
Draw forth the cheerful day from night :
O Father, touch the east, and light
The light that shone when Hope was born.

XXXI.

When Lazarus left his charnel-cave,
And home to Mary's house returned,
Was this demanded, if he yearned
To hear her weeping by his grave?

"Where wert thou, brother, those four days?"
There lives no record of reply,
Which telling what it is to die
Had surely added praise to praise.

From every house the neighbors met,
The streets were filled with joyful sound,
A solemn gladness even crowned
The purple brows of Olivet.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
The rest remaineth unrevealed;
He told it not; or something sealed
The lips of that Evangelist.

XXXII.

Her eyes are homes of silent prayer,
Nor other thought her mind admits
But, he was dead, and there he sits,
And he that brought him back is there.

Then one deep love doth supersede
All other, when her ardent gaze
Roves from the living brother's face,
And rests upon the Life indeed.

All subtle thought, all curious fears,
Borne down by gladness so complete,

She bows, she bathes the Saviour's feet
With costly spikenard and with tears.

Thrice blest whose lives are faithful prayers,
Whose loves in higher love endure ;
What souls possess themselves so pure,
Or is there blessedness like theirs ?

XXXIII.

O thou that after toil and storm
Mayst seem to have reached a purer air,
Whose faith has centre everywhere,
Nor cares to fix itself to form,

Leave thou thy sister when she prays,
Her early Heaven, her happy views ;
Nor thou with shadowed hint confuse
A life that leads melodious days.

Her faith thro' form is pure as thine,
Her hands are quicker unto good :
Oh, sacred be the flesh and blood
To which she links a truth divine !

See thou, that countest reason ripe
In holding by the law within,
Thou fail not in a world of sin,
And ev'n for want of such a type.

XXXIV.

My own dim life should teach me this,
That life shall live for evermore,
Else earth is darkness at the core,
And dust and ashes all that is ;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
 Fantastic beauty;—such as lurks
 In some wild poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
 'Twere hardly worth my while to choose
 Of things all mortal, or to use
A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
 Like birds the charming serpent draws,
 To drop head-foremost in the jaws
Of vacant darkness and to cease.

xxxv.

Yet if some voice that man could trust
 Should murmur from the narrow house,
 “The cheeks drop in; the body bows;
Man dies; nor is there hope in dust:”

Might I not say? “Yet even here,
 But for one hour, O Love, I strive
 To keep so sweet a thing alive?”
But I should turn mine ears and hear

The moanings of the homeless sea,
 The sound of streams that swift or slow
 Draw down Æonian hills, and sow
The dust of continents to be;

And Love would answer with a sigh,
 “The sound of that forgetful shore
 Will change my sweetness more and more,
Half-dead to know that I shall die.”

O me ! what profits it to put
 An idle case ? If Death were seen
 At first as Death, Love had not been,
Or been in narrowest working shut,

Mere fellowship of sluggish moods,
 Or in his coarsest Satyr-shape.
 Had bruised the herb and crushed the grape,
And basked and battened in the woods.

XXXVI.

Tho' truths in manhood darkly join,
 Deep-seated in our mystic frame,
 We yield all blessing to the name
Of Him that made them current coin ;

For wisdom dealt with mortal powers
 Where truth in closest words shall fail,
 Where truth embodied in a tale
Shall enter in at lowly doors.

And so the Word had breath, and wrought
 With human hands the creed of creeds
 In loveliness of perfect deeds,
More strong than all poetic thought ;

Which he may read that binds the sheaf,
 Or builds the house, or digs the grave,
 And those wild eyes that watch the wave
In roarings round the coral reef.

XXXVII.

Urania speaks with darkened brow :
 "Thou pratest here where thou art least ;

This faith has many a purer priest,
And many an abler voice than thou.

“Go down beside thy native rill,
On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
About the ledges of the hill.”

And my Melpomene replies,
A touch of shame upon her cheek :
“I am not worthy ev’n to speak
Of thy prevailing mysteries ;

“For I am but an earthly Muse,
And owning but a little art
To lull with song an aching heart,
And render human love his dues ;

“But brooding on the dear one dead,
And all he said of things divine,
(And dear to me as sacred wine,
To dying lips is all he said),

“I murmured, as I came along,
Of comfort clasped in truth revealed ;
And loitered in the master’s field,
And darkened sanctities with song.”

XXXVIII.

With weary steps I loiter on,
Tho’ always under altered skies
The purple from the distance dies,
My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
The herald melodies of spring,
But in the songs I love to sing
A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
Survive in spirits rendered free,
Then are these songs I sing of thee
Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

XXXIX.

Old warder of these buried bones,
And answering now my random stroke
With fruitful cloud and living smoke,
Dark yew, that graspest at the stones

And dippest toward the dreamless head,
To thee too comes the golden hour
When flower is feeling after flower ;
But Sorrow fixt upon the dead,

And darkening the dark graves of men,
What whispered from her lying lips ?
Thy gloom is kindled at the tips,
And passes into gloom again.

XL.

Could we forget the widowed hour
And look on Spirits breathed away,
As on a maiden in the day
When first she wears her orange-flower !

When crowned with blessing she doth rise
To take her latest leave of home,

And hopes and light regrets that come
Make April of her tender eyes ;

And doubtful joys the father move,
And tears are on the mother's face,
As parting with a long embrace
She enters other realms of love ;

Her office there to rear, to teach,
Becoming as is meet and fit
A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each ;

And doubtless, unto thee is given
A life that bears immortal fruit
In such great offices as suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

Ay me, the difference I discern !
How often shall her old fireside
Be cheered with tidings of the bride,
How often she herself return,

And tell them all they would have told,
And bring her babe, and make her boast,
Till even those that missed her most,
Shall count new things as dear as old :

But thou and I have shaken hands,
Till growing winters lay me low ;
My paths are in the fields I know,
And thine in undiscovered lands.

XLI.

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss
Did ever rise from high to higher ;
As mounts the heavenward altar fire,
As flies the lighter thro' the gross.

But thou art turned to something strange,
And I have lost the links that bound
Thy changes ; here upon the ground,
No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly ! yet that this could be —
That I could wing my will with might
To leap the grades of life and light,
And flash at once, my friend, to thee :

For tho' my nature rarely yields
To that vague fear implied in death ;
Nor shudders at the gulfs beneath,
The howlings from forgotten fields ;

Yet oft when sundown skirts the moor
An inner trouble I behold,
A spectral doubt which makes me cold,
That I shall be thy mate no more,

Tho' following with an upward mind
The wonders that have come to thee,
Thro' all the secular to-be,
But evermore a life behind.

XLII.

I vex my heart with fancies dim ;
He still outstript me in the race ;

It was but unity of place
That made me dream I ranked with him.

And so may Place retain us still,
And he the much-beloved again,
A lord of large experience, train
To riper growth the mind and will;

And what delights can equal those
That stir the spirit's inner deeps,
When one that loves but knows not, reaps
A truth from one that loves and knows?

XLIII.

If Sleep and Death be truly one,
And every spirit's folded bloom
Thro' all its intervital gloom
In some lone trance should slumber on ;

Unconscious of the sliding hour,
Bare of the body, might it last,
And silent traces of the past
Be all the color of the flower :

So then were nothing lost to man ;
So that still garden of the souls
In many a figured leaf enrolls
The total world since life began ;

And love will last as pure and whole
As when he loved me here in time,
And at the spiritual prime
Rewaken with the dawning soul.

XLIV.

How fares it with the happy dead?
For here the man is more and more;
But he forgets the days before
God shut the doorways of his head.

The days have vanished, tone and tint,
And yet perhaps the hoarding sense
Gives out at times (he knows not whence)
A little flash, a mystic hint;

And in the long harmonious years
(If Death so taste Lethean springs)
May some dim touch of earthly things
Surprise thee ranging with thy peers.

If such a dreamy touch should fall,
Oh, turn thee round, resolve the doubt
My guardian angel will speak out
In that high place, and tell thee all.

XLV.

The baby new to earth and sky,
What time his tender palm is prest
Against the circle of the breast,
Has never thought that "this is I:"

But as he grows he gathers much,
And learns the use of "I" and "me
And finds "I am not what I see,
And other than the things I touch."

So rounds he to a separate mind
From whence clear memory may begin,

As thro' the frame that binds him in
His isolation grows defined.

This use may lie in blood and breath,
Which else were fruitless of their due,
Had man to learn himself anew
Beyond the second birth of Death.

XLVI.

We ranging down this lower track,
The path we came by, thorn and flower,
Is shadowed by the growing hour,
Lest life should fail in looking back.

So be it: there no shade can last
In that deep dawn behind the tomb,
But clear from marge to marge shall bloom
The eternal landscape of the past;

A lifelong tract of time revealed;
The fruitful hours of still increase;
Days ordered in a wealthy peace,
And those five years its richest field.

O Love, thy province were not large,
A bounded field, nor stretching far;
Look also, Love, a brooding star,
A rosy warmth from marge to marge.

XLVII.

That each, who seems a separate whole,
Should move his rounds, and fusing all
The skirts of self again, should fall
Remerging in the general Soul,

Is faith as vague as all unsweet :
Eternal form shall still divide
The eternal soul from all beside ;
And I shall know him when we meet :

And we shall sit at endless feast,
Enjoying each the other's good :
What vaster dream can hit the mood
Of Love on earth? He seeks at least

Upon the last and sharpest height,
Before the spirits fade away,
Some landing place, to clasp and say,
"Farewell! We lose ourselves in light."

XLVIII.

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
Were taken to be such as closed
Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
Then these were such as men might scorn :

Her care is not to part and prove ;
She takes, when harsher moods remit,
What slender shade of doubt may flit,
And makes it vassal unto love :

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,
But better serves a wholesome law,
And holds it sin and shame to draw
The deepest measure from the chords :

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
But rather loosens from the lip
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

XLIX.

From art, from nature, from the schools,
Let random influences glance,
Like light in many a shivered lance
That breaks about the dappled pools :

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreathe,
The slightest air of song shall breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp.

And look thy look, and go thy way,
But blame not thou the winds that make
The seeming-wanton ripple break,
The tender-pencilled shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
Whose muffled motions blindly drown
The bases of my life in tears.

L.

Be near me when my light is low,
When the blood creeps, and the nerves prick
And tingle ; and the heart is sick,
And all the wheels of Being slow.

Be near me when the sensuous frame
Is racked with pangs that conquer trust ;
And Time, a maniac scattering dust,
And Life, a Fury slinging flame.

Be near me when my faith is dry,
And men the flies of latter spring,

That lay their eggs, and sting and sing,
And weave their petty cells and die.

Be near me when I fade away,
To point the term of human strife,
And on the low dark verge of life
The twilight of eternal day.

LI.

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame
And I be lessened in his love?

I wrong the grave with fears untrue:
Shall love be blamed for want of faith?
There must be wisdom with great Death:
The dead shall look me thro' and thro'.

Be near us when we climb or fall:
Ye watch, like God, the rolling hours
With larger other eyes than ours,
To make allowance for us all.

LII.

I cannot love thee as I ought,
For love reflects the things beloved;
My words are only words, and moved
Upon the topmost froth of thought.

"Yet blame not thou thy plaintive song,"
The spirit of true love replied ;
"Thou canst not move me from thy side,
Nor human frailty do me wrong.
"What keeps a spirit wholly true
To that ideal which he bears ?
What record ? not the sinless years
That breathed beneath the Syrian blue :
"So fret not, like an idle girl,
That life is dashed with flecks of sin.
Abide : thy wealth is gathered in,
When Time hath sundered shell from pearl."

LIII.

How many a father have I seen,
A sober man, among his boys,
Whose youth was full of foolish noise,
Who wears his manhood hale and green :

And dare we to this fancy give,
That had the wild oat not been sown,
The soil, left barren, scarce had grown
The grain by which a man may live ?

Oh, if we held the doctrine sound
For life outliving heats of youth,
Yet who would preach it as a truth
To those that eddy round and round ?

Hold thou the good : define it well :
For fear divine Philosophy
Should push beyond her mark, and be
Procuress to the lords of Hell.

LIV.

Oh, yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood ;

That nothing walks with aimless feet ;
That no one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete ;

That not a worm is cloven in vain ;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not any thing ;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last — far off — at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream : but what am I ?
An infant crying in the night :
An infant crying for the light :
And with no language but a cry.

LV.

The wish, that of the living whole
No life may fail beyond the grave,
Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul ?

Are God and Nature then at strife,
That Nature lends such evil dreams ?

So careful of the type she seems,
So careless of the single life ;

That I, considering everywhere
Her secret meaning in her deeds,
And finding that of fifty seeds
She often brings but one to bear,

I falter where I firmly trod,
And falling with my weight of cares
Upon the great world's altar-stairs
That slope thro' darkness up to God,

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,
And gather dust and chaff, and call
To what I feel is Lord of all,
And faintly trust the larger hope.

LVI.

"So careful of the type?" but no.
From scarped cliff and quarried stone
She cries : "A thousand types are gone :
I care for nothing, all shall go.

"Thou makest thine appeal to me :
I bring to life, I bring to death :
The spirit does but mean the breath :
I know no more." And he, shall he,

Man, her last work, who seemed so fair,
Such splendid purpose in his eyes,
Who rolled the psalm to wintry skies,
Who built him fanes of fruitless prayer,

Who trusted God was love indeed
And love Creation's final law —
Tho' Nature, red in tooth and claw
With ravine, shrieked against his creed —

Who loved, who suffered countless ills,
Who battled for the True, the Just,
Be blown about the desert dust,
Or sealed within the iron hills?

No more? A monster then, a dream,
A discord. Dragons of the prime,
That tear each other in their slime,
Were mellow music matched with him.

O life as futile, then, as frail!
O for thy voice to soothe and bless!
What hope of answer, or redress?
Behind the veil, behind the veil.

LVII.

Peace; come away: the song of woe
Is after all an earthly song:
Peace; come away: we do him wrong
To sing so wildly: let us go.

Come let us go: your cheeks are pale;
But half my life I leave behind:
Methinks my friend is richly shrined;
But I shall pass, my work will fail.

Yet in these ears, till hearing dies,
One set slow bell will seem to toll
The passing of the sweetest soul
That ever look'd with human eyes.

I hear it now, and o'er and o'er,
Eternal greetings to the dead,
And "Ave, Ave, Ave," said,
"Adieu, adieu," for evermore.

LVIII.

In those sad words I took farewell :
Like echoes in sepulchral halls,
As drop by drop the water falls
In vaults and catacombs, they fell ;

And, falling, idly broke the peace
Of hearts that beat from day to day,
Half-conscious of their dying clay,
And those cold crypts where they shall cease.

The high Muse answered : "Wherefore grieve
Thy brethren with a fruitless tear ?
Abide a little longer here,
And thou shalt take a nobler leave."

LIX.

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me,
No casual mistress, but a wife,
My bosom-friend and half of life ;
As I confess it needs must be ;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
And put thy harsher moods aside,
If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,
Nor will it lessen from to-day ;

But I'll have leave at times to play
As with the creature of my love ;
And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
With so much hope for years to come,
That, howsoe'er I know thee, some
Could hardly tell what name were thine.

LX.

He passed : a soul of nobler tone :
My spirit loved and loves him yet,
Like some poor girl whose heart is set
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
She finds the baseness of her lot,
Half jealous of she knows not what,
And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn ;
She sighs amid her narrow days,
Moving about the household ways,
In that dark house where she was born.

The foolish neighbors come and go,
And tease her till the day draws by :
At night she weeps, "How vain am I !
How should he love a thing so low ?"

LXI.

If, in thy second state sublime,
Thy ransomed reason change replies
With all the circle of the wise,
The perfect flower of human time ;

And if thou cast thine eyes below,
How dimly characterized and slight,
How dwarfed a growth of cold and night,
How blanched with darkness must I grow!

Yet turn thee to the doubtful shore,
Where thy first form was made a man;
I loved thee, Spirit and love, nor can
The soul of Shakespeare love thee more.

LXII.

Tho' if an eye that's downward cast
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,
Then be my love an idle tale,
And fading legend of the past;

And thou, as one that once declined,
When he was little more than boy,
On some unworthy heart with joy,
But lives to wed an equal mind;

And breathes a novel world, the while
His other passion wholly dies,
Or in the light of deeper eyes
Is matter for a flying smile.

LXIII.

Yet pity for a horse o'er-driven,
And love in which my hound has part,
Can hang no weight upon my heart
In its assumptions up to heaven;

And I am so much more than these,
As thou, perchance, art more than I,

And yet I spare them sympathy
And I would set their pains at ease.

So may'st thou watch me where I weep,
As, unto vaster motions bound,
The circuits of thine orbit round
A higher height, a deeper deep.

LXIV.

Dost thou look back on what hath been,
As some divinely gifted man,
Whose life in low estate began
And on a simple village green ;

Who breaks his birth's invidious bar,
And grasps the skirts of happy chance,
And breasts the blows of circumstance,
And grapples with his evil star ;

Who makes by force his merit known
And lives to clutch the golden keys,
To mould a mighty state's decrees,
And shape the whisper of the throne ;

And moving up from high to higher,
Becomes on Fortune's crowning slope
The pillar of a people's hope,
The centre of a world's desire ;

Yet feels, as in a pensive dream,
When all his active powers are still,
A distant dearness in the hill,
A secret sweetness in the stream,

The limit of his narrower fate,
While yet beside its vocal springs
He played at counsellors and kings,
With one that was his earliest mate ;

Who ploughs with pain his native lea
And reaps the labor of his hands,
Or in the furrow musing stands :
“ Does my old friend remember me ? ”

LXV.

Sweet soul, do with me as thou wilt ;
I lull a fancy trouble-tossed
With “ Love’s too precious to be lost,
A little grain shall not be spilt.”

And in that solace can I sing,
Till out of painful phases wrought
There flutters up a happy thought,
Self-balanced on a lightsome wing :

Since we deserved the name of friends,
And thine effect so lives in me,
A part of mine may live in thee
And move thee on to noble ends.

LXVI.

You thought my heart too far diseased :
You wonder when my fancies play
To find me gay among the gay,
Like one with any trifle pleased.

The shade by which my life was crossed
Which makes a desert in the mind,

Has made me kindly with my kind,
And like to him whose sight is lost ;

Whose feet are guided thro' the land,
Whose jest among his friends is free,
Who takes the children on his knee,
And winds their curls about his hand :

He plays with threads, he beats his chair
For pastime, dreaming of the sky ;
His inner day can never die,
His night of loss is always there.

LXVII.

When on my bed the moonlight falls,
I know that in thy place of rest,
By that broad water of the west,
There comes a glory on the walls :

Thy marble bright in dark appears,
As slowly steals a silver flame
Along the letters of thy name,
And o'er the number of thy years.

The mystic glory swims away ;
From off my bed the moonlight dies ;
And closing eaves of wearied eyes
I sleep till dusk is dipped in gray :

And then I know the mist is drawn
A lucid veil from coast to coast,
And in the dark church like a ghost
Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

LXVIII.

When in the down I sink my head,
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath;
Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not Death,
Nor can I dream of thee as dead.

I walk as ere I walked forlorn,
When all our path was fresh with dew,
And all the bugle breezes blew
Reveillée to the breaking morn.

But what is this? I turn about,
I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad I know not why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt:

But ere the lark hath left the lea
I wake, and I discern the truth;
It is the trouble of my youth
That foolish sleep transfers to thee.

LXIX.

I dreamed there would be Spring no more,
That Nature's ancient power was lost:
The streets were black with smoke and frost,
They chattered trifles at the door:

I wandered from the noisy town,
I found a wood with thorny boughs:
I took the thorns to bind my brows,
I wore them like a civic crown:

I met with scoffs, I met with scorns
From youth and babe and hoary hairs:

They called me in the public squares
The fool that wears a crown of thorns :

They called me fool, they called me child :
I found an angel of the night ;
The voice was low, the look was bright ;
He looked upon my crown and smiled :

He reached the glory of a hand,
That seemed to touch it into leaf :
The voice was not the voice of grief ;
The words were hard to understand.

LXX.

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to paint
The face I know ; the hues are faint
And mix with hollow masks of night ;

Cloud-towers by ghostly masons wrought,
A gulf that ever shuts and gapes,
A hand that points, and pallèd shapes
In shadowy thoroughfares of thought ;

And crowds that stream from yawning doors,
And shoals of puckered faces drive ;
Dark bulks that tumble half alive,
And lazy lengths on boundless shores ;

Till all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

LXXI.

Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance
And madness, thou hast forged at last
A night-long Present of the Past
In which we went thro' summer France.

Hadst thou such credit with the soul?
Then bring an opiate trebly strong,
Drug down the blindfold sense of wrong
That so my pleasure may be whole;

While now we talk as once we talked
Of men and minds, the dust of change,
The days that grow to something strange,
In walking as of old we walked

Beside the river's wooded reach,
The fortress, and the mountain ridge,
The cataract flashing from the bridge,
The breaker breaking on the beach.

LXXII.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
And howlest, issuing out of night,
With blasts that blow the poplar white,
And lash with storm the streaming pane?

Day when my crowned estate begun
To pine in that reverse of doom,
Which sickened every living bloom,
And blurred the splendor of the sun;

Who usherest in the dolorous hour
With thy quick tears that make the rose

Pull sideways, and the daisy close
Her crimson fringes to the shower ;

Who might'st have heaved a windless flame
Up the deep East, or, whispering, played
A chequer-work of beam and shade
Along the hills, yet looked the same,

As wan, as chill, as wild as now ;
Day, marked as with some hideous crime,
When the dark hand struck down thro' time
And cancelled nature's best : but thou,

Lift as thou may'st thy burdened brows
Thro' clouds that drench the morning star,
And whirl the ungarnered sheaf afar,
And sow the sky with flying boughs,

And up thy vault with roaring sound
Climb thy thick noon, disastrous day ;
Touch thy dull goal of joyless gray,
And hide thy shame beneath the ground.

LXXIII.

So many worlds, so much to do,
So little done, such things to be,
How know I what had need of thee,
For thou wert strong as thou wert true ?

The fame is quenched that I foresaw,
The head hath missed an earthly wreath ;
I curse not nature, no, nor death ;
For nothing is that errs from law.

We pass : the path that each man trod
Is dim, or will be dim, with weeds :
What fame is left for human deeds
In endless age ? It rests with God.

O hollow wraith of dying fame,
Fade wholly, while the soul exults,
And self-infolds the large results
Of force that would have forged a name.

LXXIV.

As sometimes in a dead man's face,
To those that watch it more and more,
A likeness, hardly seen before,
Comes out — to some one of his race :

So, dearest, now thy brows are cold,
I see thee what thou art, and know
Thy likeness to the wise below,
Thy kindred with the great of old.

But there is more than I can see,
And what I see I leave unsaid,
Nor speak it, knowing Death has made
His darkness beautiful with thee.

LXXV.

I leave thy praises unexpressed
In verse that brings myself relief,
And by the measure of my grief
I leave thy greatness to be guessed ;

What practice howsoe'er expert
In fitting aptest words to things,

Or voice the richest-toned that sings,
Hath power to give thee as thou wert ?

I care not in these fading days
To raise a cry that lasts not long,
And round thee with the breeze of song
To stir a little dust of praise.

Thy leaf has perished in the green,
And, while we breathe beneath the sun,
The world which credits what is done
Is cold to all that might have been.

So here shall silence guard thy fame ;
But somewhere, out of human view,
Whate'er thy hands are set to do
Is wrought with tumult of acclaim.

LXXVI.

Take wings of fancy, and ascend,
And in a moment set thy face
Where all the starry heavens of space
Are sharpened to a needle's end ;

Take wings of foresight ; lighten thro'
The secular abyss to come,
And lo, thy deepest lays are dumb
Before the mouldering of a yew ;

And if the matin songs, that woke
The darkness of our planet, last,
Thine own shall wither in the vast,
Ere half the lifetime of an oak.

Ere these have clothed their branchy bowers
With fifty Mays, thy songs are vain ;
And what are they when these remain
The ruined shells of hollow towers ?

LXXVII.

What hope is here for modern rhyme
To him who turns a musing eye
On songs, and deeds, and lives, that lie
Foreshortened in the tract of time ?

These mortal lullabies of pain
May bind a book, may line a box,
May serve to curl a maiden's locks ;
Or when a thousand moons shall wane

A man upon a stall may find,
And passing, turn the page that tells
A grief, then changed to something else,
Sung by a long-forgotten mind.

But what of that ? My darkened ways
Shall ring with music all the same :
To breathe my loss is more than fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

LXXVIII.

Again at Christmas did we weave
The holly round the Christmas hearth ;
The silent snow possessed the earth,
And calmly fell our Christmas-eve :

The yule-clog sparkled keen with frost,
No wing of wind the region swept,

But over all things brooding slept
The quiet sense of something lost.

As in the winters left behind,
Again our ancient games had place,
The mimic picture's breathing grace,
And dance and song and hoodman-blind.

Who showed a token of distress?
No single tear, no mark of pain:
O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!
No — mixed with all this mystic frame,
Her deep relations are the same,
But with long use her tears are dry.

LXXIX.

"More than my brothers are to me" —
Let this not vex thee, noble heart!
I know thee of what force thou art
To hold the costliest love in fee.

But thou and I are one in kind,
As moulded like in Nature's mint;
And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curled
Thro' all his eddying coves; the same
All winds that roam the twilight came
In whispers of the beauteous world.

At one dear knee we proffered vows,
One lesson from one book we learned,
Ere childhood's flaxen ringlet turned
To black and brown on kindred brows.

And so my wealth resembles thine,
But he was rich where I was poor,
And he supplied my want the more
As his unlikeness fitted mine.

LXXX.

If any vague desire should rise,
That holy Death ere Arthur died
Had moved me kindly from his side,
And dropped the dust on tearless eyes;

Then fancy shapes, as fancy can,
The grief my loss in him had wrought,
A grief as deep as life or thought,
But stayed in peace with God and man.

I make a picture in the brain;
I hear the sentence that he speaks;
He bears the burden of the weeks;
But turns his burden into gain.

His credit thus shall set me free;
And, influence-rich to soothe and save,
Unused example from the grave
Reach out dead hands to comfort me.

LXXXI.

Could I have said while he was here,
"My love shall now no further range;

There cannot come a mellow change,
For now is love mature in ear."

Love, then, had hope of richer store:
What end is here to my complaint?
This haunting whisper makes me faint,
"More years had made me love thee more."

But Death returns an answer sweet:
"My sudden frost was sudden gain,
And gave all ripeness to the grain,
It might have drawn from after-heat."

LXXXII.

I wage not any feud with Death
For changes wrought on form and face;
No lower life that earth's embrace
May breed with him, can fright my faith.

Eternal process moving on,
From state to state the spirit walks;
And these are but the shattered stalks,
Or ruined chrysalis of one.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
The use of virtue out of earth:
I know transplanted human worth
Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
The wrath that garners in my heart;
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

LXXXIII.

Dip down upon the northern shore,
O sweet New-Year delaying long ;
Thou doest expectant nature wrong ;
Delaying long, delay no more.

What stays thee from the clouded noons,
Thy sweetness from its proper place ?
Can trouble live with April days,
Or sadness in the summer moons ?

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire.

O thou, New-Year, delaying long,
Delayest the sorrow in my blood,
That longs to burst a frozen bud,
And flood a fresher throat with song.

LXXXIV.

When I contemplate all alone
The life that had been thine below,
And fix my thoughts on all the glow
To which thy crescent would have grown ;

I see thee sitting crowned with good,
A central warmth diffusing bliss
In glance and smile, and clasp and kiss,
On all the branches of thy blood ;

Thy blood, my friend, and partly mine ;
For now the day was drawing on,

When thou should'st link thy life with one
Of mine own house, and boys of thine

Had babbled "Uncle" on my knee;
But that remorseless iron hour
Made cypress of her orange flower,
Despair of Hope, and earth of thee.

I seem to meet their least desire,
To clap their cheeks, to call them mine.
I see their unborn faces shine
Beside the never-lighted fire.

I see myself an honored guest,
Thy partner in the flowery walk
Of letters, genial table-talk,
Or deep dispute, and graceful jest;

While now thy prosperous labor fills
The lips of men with honest praise,
And sun by sun the happy days
Descend below the golden hills

With promise of a morn as fair;
And all the train of bounteous hours
Conduct by paths of growing powers
To reverence and the silver hair;

Till slowly worn her earthly robe,
Her lavish mission richly wrought,
Leaving great legacies of thought,
Thy spirit should fail from off the globe;

What time mine own might also flee,
As linked with thine in love and fate,

And, hovering o'er the dolorous strait
To the other shore, involved in thee,

Arrive at last the blessed goal,
And He that died in Holy Land
Would reach us out the shining hand,
And take us as a single soul.

What reed was that on which I leant?
Ah, backward fancy, wherefore wake
The old bitterness again, and break
The low beginnings of content.

LXXXV.

This truth came borne with bier and pall,
I felt it, when I sorrowed most,
'Tis better to have loved and lost,
Than never to have loved at all —

O true in word, and tried in deed,
Demanding, so to bring relief
To this which is our common grief,
What kind of life is that I lead ;

And whether trust in things above
Be dimmed of sorrow, or sustained ;
And whether love for him have drained
My capabilities of love ;

Your words have virtue such as draws
A faithful answer from the breast,
Thro' light reproaches, half expressed,
And loyal unto kindly laws.

My blood an even tenor kept,
Till on mine ear this message falls,
That in Vienna's fatal walls
God's finger touched him, and he slept.

The great Intelligences fair
That range above our mortal state,
In circle round the blessed gate,
Received and gave him welcome there;

And led him thro' the blissful climes,
And showed him in the fountain fresh
All knowledge that the sons of flesh
Shall gather in the cycled times.

But I remained, whose hopes were dim,
Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth,
To wander on a darkened earth,
Where all things round me breathed of him.

O friendship, equal-poised control,
O heart, with kindest motion warm,
O sacred essence, other form,
O solemn ghost, O crowned soul!

Yet none could better know than I,
How much of act at human hands
The sense of human will demands
By which we dare to live or die.

Whatever way my days decline,
I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine;

A life that all the Muses decked
With gifts of grace, that might express
All-comprehensive tenderness,
All-subtilizing intellect :

And so my passion hath not swerved
To works of weakness, but I find
An image comforting the mind,
And in my grief a strength reserved.

Likewise the imaginative woe,
That loved to handle spiritual strife,
Diffused the shock thro' all my life,
But in the present broke the blow.

My pulses therefore beat again
For other friends that once I met ;
Nor can it suit me to forget
The mighty hopes that make us men.

I woo your love : I count it crime
To mourn for any overmuch ;
I, the divided half of such
A friendship as had mastered Time ;

Which masters Time indeed, and is
Eternal, separate from fears :
The all-assuming months and years
Can take no part away from this :

But Summer on the steaming floods,
And Spring that swells the narrow brooks,
And Autumn, with a noise of rooks,
That gather in the waning woods,

And every pulse of wind and wave
Recalls, in change of light or gloom,
My old affection of the tomb,
And my prime passion in the grave :

My old affection of the tomb,
A part of stillness, yearns to speak :
" Arise, and get thee forth and seek
A friendship for the years to come.

" I watch thee from the quiet shore :
Thy spirit up to mine can reach ;
But in dear words of human speech
We two communicate no more."

And I, " Can clouds of nature stain
The starry clearness of the free ?
How is it ? Canst thou feel for me
Some painless sympathy with pain ?"

And lightly does the whisper fall :
" 'Tis hard for thee to fathom this ;
I triumph in conclusive bliss,
And that serene result of all."

So hold I commerce with the dead ;
Or so methinks the dead would say ;
Or so shall grief with symbols play,
And pining life be fancy-fed.

Now looking to some settled end,
That these things pass, and I shall prove
A meeting somewhere, love with love,
I crave your pardon, O my friend ;

If not so fresh, with love as true,
I, clasping brother-hands, aver
I could not, if I would, transfer
The whole I felt for him to you.

For which be they that hold apart
The promise of the golden hours?
First love, first friendship, equal powers,
That marry with the virgin heart.

Still mine, that cannot but deplore,
That beats within a lonely place,
That yet remembers his embrace,
But at his footstep leaps no more,

My heart, tho' widowed, may not rest
Quite in the love of what is gone,
But seeks to beat in time with one
That warms another living breast.

Ah, take the imperfect gift I bring,
Knowing the primrose yet is dear,
The primrose of the later year,
As not unlike to that of Spring.

LXXXVI.

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Thro' all the dewy-tasselled wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odor streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper "Peace."

LXXXVII.

I passed beside the reverend walls
In which of old I wore the gown ;
I roved at random thro' the town,
And saw the tumult of the halls ;

And heard once more in college fanes
The storm their high-built organs make,
And thunder-music, rolling, shake
The prophets blazoned on the panes ;

And caught once more the distant shout,
The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows ; paced the shores
And many a bridge, and all about

The same gray flats again, and felt
The same, but not the same ; and last
Up that long walk of limes I passed
To see the rooms in which he dwelt.

Another name was on the door :
I lingered ; all within was noise
Of song, and clapping hands, and boys
That crashed the glass and beat the floor ;

Where once we held debate, a band
Of youthful friends, on mind and art,
And labor, and the changing mart,
And all the framework of the land ;

When one would aim an arrow fair,
But send it slackly from the string ;
And one would pierce an outer ring
And one an inner, here and there ;

And last the master-bowman, he
Would cleave the mark. A willing ear
We lent him. Who, but hung to hear
The rapt oration flowing free

From point to point, with power and grace
And music in the bounds of law,
To those conclusions when we saw
The God within him light his face,

And seem to lift the form, and glow
In azure orbits heavenly-wise ;
And over those ethereal eyes
The bar of Michael Angelo.

LXXXVIII.

Wild bird, whose warble, liquid sweet,
Rings Eden thro' the budded quicks,
Oh, tell me where the senses mix,
Oh, tell me where the passions meet,

Whence radiate : fierce extremes employ
Thy spirits in the darkening leaf,

And in the midmost heart of grief
Thy passion clasps a secret joy :

And I — my harp would prelude woe —
I cannot all command the strings ;
The glory of the sun of things
Will flash along the chords and go.

LXXXIX.

Witch-elms that counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright :
And thou, with all thy breadth and height
Of foliage, towering sycamore ;

How often, hither wandering down,
My Arthur found your shadows fair,
And shook to all the liberal air
The dust and din and steam of town :

He brought an eye for all he saw ;
He mixed in all our simple sports ;
They pleased him, fresh from brawling courts
And dusty purlieus of the law.

Oh, joy to him in this retreat,
Immantled in ambrosial dark,
To drink the cooler air, and mark
The landscape winking thro' the heat :

Oh, sound to rout the brood of cares,
The sweep of scythe in morning dew,
The gust that round the garden flew,
And tumbled half the mellowing pears !

Oh, bliss, when all in circle drawn
About him, heart and ear were fed
To hear him, as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn :

Or in the all-golden afternoon
A guest, or happy sister, sung,
Or here she brought the harp and flung
A ballad to the brightening moon :

Nor less it pleased in livelier moods,
Beyond the bounding hill to stray,
And break the livelong summer day
With banquet in the distant woods ;

Whereat we glanced from theme to theme,
Discussed the books to love or hate,
Or touched the changes of the state,
Or threaded some Socratic dream ;

But if I praised the busy town,
He loved to rail against it still,
For "ground in yonder social mill
We rub each other's angles down,

"And merge," he said, "in form and gloss
The picturesque of man and man."
We talked : the stream beneath us ran,
The wine-flask lying couched in moss,

Or cooled within the glooming wave ;
And last, returning from afar,
Before the crimson-circled star
Had fall'n into her father's grave,

And brushing ankle-deep in flowers,
We heard behind the woodbine veil
The milk that bubbled in the pail,
And buzzings of the honeyed hours.

XC.

He tasted love with half his mind,
Nor ever drank the inviolate spring
Where nighest heaven, who first could fling
This bitter seed among mankind ;

That could the dead, whose dying eyes
Were closed with wail, resume their life,
They would but find in child and wife
An iron welcome when they rise :

'Twas well, indeed, when warm with wine,
To pledge them with a kindly tear,
To talk them o'er, to wish them here,
To count their memories half divine ;

But if they came who passed away,
Behold their brides in other hands ;
The hard heir strides about their lands,
And will not yield them for a day.

Yea, tho' their sons were none of these, 'e
Not less the yet-loved sire would make
Confusion worse than death, and shake
The pillars of domestic peace.

Ah dear, but come thou back to me :
Whatever change the years have wrought,
I find not yet one lonely thought
That cries against my wish for thee.

XCI.

When rosy plumelets tuft the larch,
And rarely pipes the mounted thrush;
Or underneath the barren bush
Flits by the sea-blue bird of March;

Come, wear the form by which I know
Thy spirit in time among thy peers,
The hope of unaccomplish'd years
Be large and lucid round thy brow.

When summer's hourly-mellowing change
May breathe, with many roses sweet,
Upon the thousand waves of wheat,
That ripple round the lonely grange;

Come: not in watches of the night,
But when the sunbeam broodeth warm,
Come, beauteous in thine after form,
And like a finer light in light.

XCII.

If any vision should reveal
Thy likeness, I might count it vain,
As but the canker of the brain:
Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
Together in the days behind,
I might but say, I hear a wind
Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
A fact within the coming year;

And tho' the months, revolving near,
Should prove the phantom-warning true,
They might not seem thy prophecies,
But spiritual presentiments,
And such refraction of events
As often rises ere they rise.

XCIII.

I shall not see thee. Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land,
Where first he walked when clasped in clay?

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb;
Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

Oh, therefore, from thy sightless range
With gods in unconjectured bliss,
Oh, from the distance of the abyss
Of tenfold-complicated change,

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to name;
That in this blindness of the frame
My ghost may feel that thine is near.

XCIV.

How pure at heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say,
My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imaginations calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest :

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

xcv.

By night we lingered on the lawn,
For underfoot the herb was dry ;
And genial warmth ; and o'er the sky
The silvery haze of summer drawn ;

And calm that let the tapers burn
Unwavering : not a cricket chirred ;
The brook alone far off was heard,
And on the board the fluttering urn :

And bats went round in fragrant skies,
And wheeled or lit the filmy shapes
That haunt the dusk, with ermine capes
And woolly breasts and beaded eyes ;

While now we sang old songs that pealed
From knoll to knoll, where, couched at ease,

The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field.

But when those others, one by one,
Withdrew themselves from me and night,
And in the house light after light
Went out, and I was all alone,

A hunger seized my heart ; I read
Of that glad year which once had been,
In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,
The noble letters of the dead :

And strangely on the silence broke
The silent-speaking words, and strange
Was love's dumb cry defying change
To test his worth ; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigor, bold to dwell
On doubts that drive the coward back,
And keen thro' wordy snares to track
Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touched me from the past,
And all at once it seemed at last
His living soul was flashed on mine,

And mine in his was wound, and whirled
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Æonian music measuring out
The steps of Time, the shocks of Chance,

The blows of Death. At length my trance
Was cancelled, stricken thro' with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
In matter-moulded forms of speech,
Or ev'n for intellect to reach
Thro' memory that which I became :

Till now the doubtful dusk revealed
The knoll once more where, couched at ease,
The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field :

And, sucked from out the distant gloom,
A breeze began to tremble o'er
The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
Rocked the full-foliaged elms, and swung
The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said

"The dawn, the dawn!" and died away;
And East and West, without a breath,
Mixed their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

XCVI.

You say, but with no touch of scorn,
Sweet-hearted, you, whose light blue eyes
Are tender over drowning flies,
You tell me, doubt is devil-born.

I know not : one indeed I knew
In many a subtle question versed,
Who touched a jarring lyre at first,
But ever strove to make it true :

Perplexed in faith, but pure in deeds,
At last he beat his music out.
There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds.

He fought his doubts and gathered strength,
He would not make his judgment blind,
He faced the spectres of the mind
And laid them : thus he came at length

To find a stronger faith his own ;
And power was with him in the night,
Which makes the darkness and the light,
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,
As over Sinai's peaks of old,
While Israel made their gods of gold,
Altho' the trumpet blew so loud.

XCVII.

My love has talked with rocks and trees ;
He finds on misty mountain-ground
His own vast shadow glory-crowned ;
He sees himself in all he sees.

Two partners of a married life —
I looked on these and thought of thee
In vastness and in mystery,
And of my spirit as of a wife.

These two — they dwelt with eye on eye,
Their hearts of old have beat in tune,
Their meetings made December June,
Their every parting was to die.

Their love has never passed away ;
The days she never can forget
Are earnest that he loves her yet,
Whate'er the faithless people say.

Her life is lone, he sits apart,
He loves her yet, she will not weep,
Tho' rapt in matters dark and deep
He seems to slight her simple heart.

He threads the labyrinth of the mind,
He reads the secret of the star,
He seems so near and yet so far,
He looks so cold : she thinks him kind.

She keeps the gift of years before,
A withered violet is her bliss ;
She knows not what his greatness is :
For that, for all, she loves him more.

For him she plays, to him she sings
Of early faith and plighted vows ;
She knows but matters of the house,
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Her faith is fixed and cannot move,
She darkly feels him great and wise,
She dwells on him with faithful eyes,
" I cannot understand ; I love."

XCVIII.

You leave us : you will see the Rhine,
And those fair hills I sailed below,
When I was there with him ; and go
By summer belts of wheat and vine

To where he breathed his latest breath
That city. All her splendor seems
No livelier than the wisp that gleams
On Lethe in the eyes of Death.

Let her great Danube rolling fair
Enwind her isles, unmarked of me :
I have not seen, I will not see
Vienna ; rather dream that there,

A treble darkness, Evil haunts
The birth, the bridal ; friend from friend
Is oftener parted, fathers bend
Above more graves, a thousand wants

Gnarr at the heels of men, and prey
By each cold hearth, and sadness flings
Her shadow on the blaze of kings :
And yet myself have heard him say,

That not in any mother town
With statelier progress to and fro
The double tides of chariots flow
By park and suburb under brown

Of lustier leaves ; no more content,
He told me, lives in any crowd,
When all is gay with lamps, and loud
With sport and song, in booth and tent,

Imperial halls, or open plain ;
And wheels the circled dance, and breaks
The rocket molten into flakes
Of crimson or in emerald rain.

XCIX.

Risest thou thus, dim dawn, again,
So loud with voices of the birds,
So thick with lowing of the herds,
Day, when I lost the flower of men ;

Who tremblest thro' thy darkling red
On yon swoll'n brook that bubbles fast
By meadows breathing of the past,
And woodlands holy to the dead ;

Who murmurest in the foliaged eaves
A song that slights the coming care,
And Autumn laying here and there
A fiery finger on the leaves ;

Who wakenest with thy balmy breath
To myriads on the genial earth,
Memories of bridal, or of birth,
And unto myriads more, of death.

Oh, wheresoever those may be,
Betwixt the slumber of the poles,
To-day they count as kindred souls ;
They know me not, but mourn with me.

C.

I climb the hill ; from end to end
Of all the landscape underneath,

I find no place that does not breathe
Some gracious memory of my friend ;

No gray old grange, or lonely fold,
Or low morass and whispering reed,
Or simple stile from mead to mead,
Or sheepwalk up the windy wold ;

Nor hoary knoll of ash and haw
That hears the latest linnet trill,
Nor quarry trenched along the hill,
And haunted by the wrangling daw ;

Nor runlet tinkling from the rock ;
Nor pastoral rivulet that swerves
To left and right thro' meadowy curves,
That feed the mothers of the flock ;

But each has pleased a kindred eye,
And each reflects a kindlier day ;
And, leaving these, to pass away,
I think once more he seems to die.

CI.

Unwatched, the garden bough shall sway,
The tender blossom flutter down
Unloved, that beech will gather brown,
This maple burn itself away ;

Unloved, the sun-flower, shining fair,
Ray round with flames her disk of seed,
And many a rose-carnation feed
With summer spice the humming air ;

Unloved, by many a sandy bar,
The brook shall babble down the plain,
At noon, or when the lesser wain
Is twisting round the polar star ;

Uncared for, gird the windy grove,
And flood the haunts of hern and crake ;
Or into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove ;

Till from the garden and the wild
A fresh association blow,
And year by year the landscape grow
Familiar to the stranger's child ;

As year by year the laborer tills
His wonted glebe, or lops the glades ;
And year by year our memory fades
From all the circle of the hills.

CII.

We leave the well-beloved place
Where first we gazed upon the sky ;
The roofs, that heard our earliest cry,
Will shelter one of stranger race.

We go, but ere we go from home,
As down the garden-walks I move,
Two spirits of a diverse love
Contend for loving masterdom.

One whispers, " Here thy boyhood sung
Long since its matin song, and heard

The low love-language of the bird
In native hazels tassel-hung."

The other answers, "Yea, but here
Thy feet have strayed in after hours
With thy lost friend among the bowers,
And this hath made them trebly dear."

These two have striven half the day,
And each prefers his separate claim,
Poor rivals in a losing game,
That will not yield each other way.

I turn to go ; my feet are set
To leave the pleasant fields and farms ;
They mix in one another's arms
To one pure image of regret.

CIII.

On that last night before we went
From out the doors where I was bred,
I dreamed a vision of the dead,
Which left my after-morn content.

Methought I dwelt within a hall,
And maidens with me : distant hills
From hidden summits fed with rills
A river sliding by the wall.

The hall with harp and carol rang.
They sang of what is wise and good
And graceful. In the centre stood
A statue veiled, to which they sang ;

And which, tho' veil'd, was known to me,
The shape of him I loved, and love
For ever : then flew in a dove
And brought a summons from the sea :

And when they learned that I must go
They wept and wailed, but led the way
To where a little shallop lay
At anchor in the flood below ;

And on by many a level mead,
And shadowing bluff that made the banks,
We glided winding under ranks
Of iris, and the golden reed ;

And still as vaster grew the shore,
And rolled the floods in grander space,
The maidens gathered strength and grace
And presence, lordlier than before ;

And I myself, who sat apart
And watch'd them, waxed in every limb ;
I felt the thews of Anakim,
The pulses of a Titan's heart ;

As one would sing the death of war,
And one would chant the history
Of that great race, which is to be,
And one the shaping of a star ;

Until the forward-creeping tides
Began to foam, and we to draw
From deep to deep, to where we saw
A great ship lift her shining sides.

The man we loved was there on deck,
But thrice as large as man he bent
To greet us. Up the side I went,
And fell in silence on his neck :

Whereat those maidens with one mind
Bewailed their lot ; I did them wrong :
“ We served thee here,” they said, “ so long,
And wilt thou leave us now behind ? ”

So rapt I was, they could not win
An answer from my lips, but he
Replying “ Enter likewise ye
And go with us : ” they entered in.

And while the wind began to sweep
A music out of sheet and shroud,
We steered her toward a crimson cloud
That land-like slept along the deep.

CIV.

The time draws near the birth of Christ ;
The moon is hid, the night is still ;
A single church below the hill
Is peeling, folded in the mist.

A single peal of bells below,
That wakens at this hour of rest
A single murmur in the breast,
That these are not the bells I know.

Like strangers' voices here they sound,
In lands where not a memory strays,
Nor landmark breathes of other days,
But all is new unhallowed ground.

CV.

To-night ungathered let us leave
This laurel, let this holly stand :
We live within the stranger's land,
And strangely falls our Christmas eve.

Our father's dust is left alone
And silent under other snows :
There in due time the woodbine blows,
The violet comes, but we are gone.

No more shall wayward grief abuse
The genial hour with mask and mime ;
For change of place, like growth of time,
Has broke the bond of dying use.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
By which our lives are chiefly proved,
A little spare the night I loved,
And hold it solemn to the past.

But let no footsteps beat the floor,
Nor bowl of wassail mantle warm ;
For who would keep an ancient form
Thro' which the spirit breathes no more ?

Be neither song, nor game, nor feast ;
Nor harp be touched, nor flute be blown ;
No dance, no motion, save alone
What lightens in the lucid east

Of rising worlds by yonder wood.
Long sleeps the summer in the seed ;
Run out your measured arcs, and lead
The closing cycle rich in good.

CVI.

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
The flying cloud, the frosty light :
The year is dying in the night :
Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow :
The year is going, let him go ;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,
For those that here we see no more ;
Ring out the feud of rich and poor,
Ring in redress to all mankind.

Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife ;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws.

Ring out the want, the care, the sin,
The faithless coldness of the times ;
Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes,
But ring the fuller minstrel in.

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite ;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

Ring out old shapes of foul disease ;
Ring out the narrowing lust of gold ;
Ring out the thousand wars of old,
Ring in the thousand years of peace.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be.

CVII.

It is the day when he was born,
A bitter day that early sank
Behind a purple-frosty bank
Of vapor, leaving night forlorn.

The time admits not flowers or leaves
To deck the banquet. Fiercely flies
The blast of North and East, and ice
Makes daggers at the sharpened eaves,

And bristles all the brakes and thorns
To yon hard crescent, as she hangs
About the wood which grides and clangs
Its leafless ribs and iron horns

Together in the drifts that pass
To darken on the rolling brine
That breaks the coast. But fetch the wine,
Arrange the board and brim the glass;

Bring in great logs and let them lie,
To make a solid core of heat;
Be cheerful-minded, talk and treat
Of all things ev'n as he were by;

We keep the day. With festal cheer,
With books and music, surely we
Will drink to him, whate'er he be,
And sing the songs he loved to hear.

CVIII.

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind :

What profit lies in barren faith,
And vacant yearning, tho' with might
To scale the heaven's highest height,
Or dive below the wells of Death ?

What find I in the highest place,
But mine own phantom chanting hymns ?
And on the depths of death there swims
The reflex of a human face.

I'll rather take what fruit may be
Of sorrow under human skies :
'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise,
Whatever wisdom sleep with thee.

CIX.

Heart-affluence in discursive talk
From household fountains never dry ;
The critic clearness of an eye,
That saw thro' all the Muses' walk ;

Seraphic intellect and force
To seize and throw the doubts of man ;
Impassioned logic, which outran
The hearer in its fiery course ;

High nature amorous of the good,
But touched with no ascetic gloom ;

And passion pure in snowy bloom
Thro' all the years of April blood ;

A love of freedom rarely felt,
Of freedom in her regal seat
Of England ; not the schoolboy heat,
The blind hysterics of the Celt ;

And manhood fused with female grace
In such a sort, the child would twine
A trustful hand, unasked, in thine,
And find his comfort in thy face ;

All these have been, and thee mine eyes
Have looked on : if they looked in vain,
My shame is greater who remain,
Nor let thy wisdom make me wise.

CX.

Thy converse drew us with delight,
The men of rathe and riper years :
The feeble soul a haunt of fears,
Forgot his weakness in thy sight.

On thee the loyal-hearted hung,
The proud was half disarmed of pride,
Nor cared the serpent at thy side
To flicker with his double tongue.

The stern were mild when thou wert by,
The flippant put himself to school
And heard thee, and the brazen fool
Was softened, and he knew not why ;

While I, thy dearest, sat apart,
And felt thy triumph was as mine;
And loved them more, that they were thine,
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Not mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

CXI.

The churl in spirit, up or down
Along the scale of ranks, thro' all,
To him who grasps a golden ball,
By blood a king, at heart a clown;

The churl in spirit, howe'er he veil
His want in forms for fashion's sake
Will let his coltish nature break
At seasons thro' the gilded pale:

For who can always act? but he,
To whom a thousand memories call,
Not being less but more than all
The gentleness he seemed to be,

Best seemed the thing he was, and joined
Each office of the social hour
To noble manners, as the flower
And native growth of noble mind;

Nor ever narrowness or spite,
Or villain fancy fleeting by,
Drew in the expression of an eye,
Where God and Nature met in light;

And thus he bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soiled with all ignoble use.

CXII.

High wisdom holds my wisdom less,
That I, who gaze with temperate eyes
On glorious insufficiencies,
Set light by narrow perfectness.

But thou, that fillest all the room
Of all my love, art reason why
I seem to cast a careless eye
On souls, the lesser lords of doom.

For what wert thou? some novel power
Sprang up for ever at a touch,
And hope could never hope too much,
In watching thee from hour to hour,

Large elements in order brought,
And tracts of calm from tempest made,
And world-wide fluctuation swayed,
In vassal tides that followed thought.

CXIII.

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise;
Yet how much wisdom sleeps with thee
Which not alone had guided me,
But served the seasons that may rise;

For can I doubt, who knew the keen
In intellect, with force and skill

To strive, to fashion, to fulfil —
I doubt not what thou wouldst have been :

A life in civic action warm,
A soul on highest mission sent,
A potent voice of Parliament,
A pillar steadfast in the storm,

Should licensed boldness gather force,
Becoming, when the time has birth,
A lever to uplift the earth
And roll it in another course,

With thousand shocks that come and go,
With agonies, with energies,
With overthrowings, and with cries,
And undulations to and fro.

CXIV.

Who loves not Knowledge ? Who shall rail
Against her beauty ? May she mix
With men and prosper ! Who shall fix
Her pillars ? Let her work prevail.

But on her forehead sits a fire :
She sets her forward countenance
And leaps into the future chance,
Submitting all things to desire.

Half-grown as yet, a child, and vain —
She cannot fight the fear of death.
What is she, cut from love and faith,
But some wild Pallas from the brain

Of demons? fiery-hot to burst
All barriers in her onward race
For power. Let her know her place;
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,
If all be not in vain; and guide
Her footsteps, moving side by side
With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the mind,
But Wisdom heavenly of the soul.
O friend, who camest to thy goal
So early, leaving me behind,

I would the great world grew like thee,
Who grewest not alone in power
And knowledge, but by year and hour
In reverence and in charity.

CXV.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
Now bourgeons every maze of quick
About the flowering squares, and thick
By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
The distance takes a lovelier hue,
And drowned in yonder living blue
The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea,
The flocks are whiter down the vale,
And milkier every milky sail
On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
In yonder greening gleam, and fly
The happy birds, that change their sky
To build and brood ; that live their lives

From land to land ; and in my breast
Spring wakens too ; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

CXVI.

Is it, then, regret for buried time
That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
And meets the year, and gives and takes
The colors of the crescent prime ?

Not all : the songs, the stirring air,
The life re-orient out of dust,
Cry thro' the sense to hearten trust
In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret ; the face will shine
Upon me, while I muse alone ;
And that dear voice, I once have known,
Still speak to me of me and mine :

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
For days of happy commune dead ;
Less yearning for the friendship fled
Than some strong bond which is to be.

CXVII.

O days and hours, your work is this,
To hold me from my proper place,

A little while from his embrace,
For fuller gain of after bliss :

That out of distance might ensue
Desire of nearness doubly sweet ;
And unto meeting when we meet,
Delight a hundredfold accrue,

For every grain of sand that runs,
And every span of shade that steals,
And every kiss of toothed wheels,
And all the courses of the suns.

CXVIII.

Contemplate all this work of Time,
The giant laboring in his youth ;
Nor dream of human love and truth,
As dying nature's earth and lime ;

But trust that those we call the dead
Are breathers of an ampler day
For ever nobler ends. They say,
The solid earth whereon we tread

In tracts of fluent heat began,
And grew to seeming-random forms,
The seeming prey of cyclic storms,
Till at the last arose the man ;

Who throve and branched from clime to clime,
The herald of a higher race,
And of himself in higher place
If so he type this work of time

Within himself, from more to more,
Or, crowned with attributes of woe
Like glories, move his course and show
That life is not as idle ore,

But iron dug from central gloom,
And heated hot with burning fears,
And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
And battered with the shocks of doom

To shape and use. Arise and fly
The reeling Faun, the sensual feast;
Move upward, working out the beast;
And let the ape and tiger die.

CXIX.

Doors, where my heart was used to beat
So quickly, not as one that weeps
I come once more; the city sleeps;
I smell the meadow in the street;

I hear a chirp of birds; I see
Betwixt the black fronts long-withdrawn
A light-blue lane of early dawn,
And think of early days and thee,

And bless thee, for thy lips are bland
And bright the friendship of thine eye;
And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh
I take the pressure of thine hand.

CXX.

I trust I have not wasted breath:
I think we are not wholly brain,

Magnetic mockeries ; not in vain,
Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death ;

Not only cunning casts in clay :
Let Science prove we are, and then
What matters Science unto men,
At least to me ? I would not stay.

Let him, the wiser man who springs
Hereafter, up from childhood shape
His action like the greater ape,
But I was born to other things.

CXXI.

Sad Hesper o'er the buried sun
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done :

The team is loosened from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the shore ;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darkened in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world's great work is heard
Beginning, and the wakeful bird ;
Behind thee comes the greater light :

The market boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink ;
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,
And see'st the moving of the team.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed ; thou art the same.

CXXII.

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,
While I rose up against my doom,
And yearned to burst the folded gloom,
To bare the eternal Heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
The strong imagination roll
A sphere of stars about my soul,
In all her motion one with law ;

If thou wert with me, and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quickened with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death ;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dew-drop paints a bow,
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

CXXIII.

There rolls the deep where grew the tree.
O earth, what changes hast thou seen !

There where the long street roars, hath been
The stillness of the central sea.

The hills are shadows, and they flow
From form to form, and nothing stands;
They melt like mist, the solid lands,
Like clouds they shape themselves and go.

But in my spirit will I dwell,
And dream my dream, and hold it true ;
For tho' my lips may breathe adieu,
I cannot think the thing farewell.

CXXIV.

That which we dare invoke to bless ;
Our dearest faith ; our ghastliest doubt ;
He, They, One, All ; within, without ;
The Power in darkness whom we guess ;

I found Him not in world or sun,
Or eagle's wing, or insect's eye ;
Nor thro' the questions men may try,
The petty cobwebs we have spun :

If e'er when faith had fall'n asleep,
I heard a voice "believe no more"
And heard an ever breaking shore
That tumbled in the Godless deep ;

A warmth within the breast would melt
The freezing reason's colder part,
And like a man in wrath the heart
Stood up and answered "I have felt."

No, like a child in doubt and fear :
But that blind clamor made me wise ;
Then was I as a child that cries,
But, crying, knows his father near ;

And what I am beheld again
What is, and no man understands ;
And out of darkness came the hands
That reach thro' nature, moulding men.

CXXV.

Whatever I have said or sung,
Some bitter notes my harp would give,
Yea, tho' there often seem'd to live
A contradiction on the tongue,

Yet Hope had never lost her youth ;
She did but look through dimmer eyes ;
Or Love but played with gracious lies,
Because he felt so fixed in truth :

And if the song were full of care,
He breathed the spirit of the song ;
And if the words were sweet and strong,
He set his royal signet there ;

Abiding with me till I sail
To seek thee on the mystic deeps,
And this electric force, that keeps
A thousand pulses dancing, fail.

CXXVI.

Love is and was my lord and king,
And in his presence I attend

To hear the tidings of my friend,
Which every hour his couriers bring.

Love is and was my king and lord,
And will be, tho' as yet I keep
Within his court on earth, and sleep
Encompassed by his faithful guard,

And hear at times a sentinel
Who moves about from place to place,
And whispers to the worlds of space,
In the deep night, that all is well.

CXXVII.

And all is well, tho' faith and form
Be sundered in the night of fear;
Well roars the storm to those that hear
A deeper voice across the storm,

Proclaiming social truth shall spread,
And justice, ev'n tho' thrice again
The red fool-fury of the Seine
Should pile her barricades with dead.

But ill for him that wears a crown,
And him, the lazar, in his rags:
They tremble, the sustaining crags;
The spires of ice are toppled down,

And molten up, and roar in flood;
The fortress crashes from on high,
The brute earth lightens to the sky,
And the great Æon sinks in blood,

And compass'd by the fires of Hell;
While thou, dear spirit, happy star,
O'erlook'st the tumult from afar,
And smilest, knowing all is well.

CXXVIII.

The love that rose on stronger wings,
Unpalsied when he met with Death,
Is comrade of the lesser faith
That sees the course of human things.

No doubt vast eddies in the flood
Of onward time shall yet be made,
And throned races may degrade;
Yet, O ye mysteries of good,

Wild hours that fly with hope and fear,
If all your office had to do
With old results that look like new;
If this were all your mission here,

To draw, to sheathe a useless sword,
To fool the crowd with glorious lies,
To cleave a creed in sects and cries,
To change the bearing of a word,

To shift an arbitrary power,
To cramp the student at his desk,
To make old bareness picturesque
And tuft with grass a feudal tower;

Why then my scorn might well descend
On you and yours. I see in part
That all, as in some piece of art,
Is toil coöperant to an end.

CXXIX.

Dear friend, far off, my lost desire,
So far, so near in woe and weal;
Oh loved the most, when most I feel
There is a lower and a higher;

Known and unknown; human, divine;
Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
Dear heavenly friend that canst not die,
Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
Love deeper, darker understood;
Behold, I dream a dream of good,
And mingle all the world with thee.

CXXX.

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair.

What art thou then? I cannot guess;
But tho' I seem in star and flower
To feel thee some diffusive power,
I do not therefore love thee less:

My love involves the love before;
My love is vaster passion now;
Tho' mix'd with God and Nature thou,
I seem to love thee more and more.

Far off thou art, but ever nigh;
I have thee still, and I rejoice;

I prosper, circled with thy voice ;
I shall not lose thee tho' I die.

CXXXI.

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquered years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

O true and tried, so well and long,
Demand not thou a marriage lay ;
In that it is thy marriage day
Is music more than any song.

Nor have I felt so much of bliss
Since first he told me that he loved
A daughter of our house ; nor proved
Since that dark day a day like this ;

Tho' I since then have numbered o'er
Some thrice three years : they went and came,
Remade the blood and changed the frame,
And yet is love not less, but more ;

No longer caring to embalm
In dying songs a dead regret,
But like a statue solid-set,
And moulded in colossal calm.

Regret is dead, but love is more
Than in the summers that are flown,
For I myself with these have grown
To something greater than before ;

Which makes appear the songs I made
As echoes out of weaker times,
As half but idle brawling rhymes,
The sport of random sun and shade.

But where is she, the bridal flower,
That must be made a wife ere noon ?
She enters, glowing like the moon
Of Eden on its bridal bower :

On me she bends her blissful eyes
And then on thee ; they meet thy look
And brighten like the star that shook
Betwixt the palms of paradise.

Oh, when her life was yet in bud,
He too foretold the perfect rose.
For thee she grew, for thee she grows
For ever, and as fair as good.

And thou art worthy ; full of power ;
As gentle ; liberal-minded, great,
Consistent ; wearing all that weight
Of learning lightly like a flower.

But now set out : the noon is near,
And I must give away the bride ;
She fears not, or with thee beside
And me behind her, will not fear :

For I that danced her on my knee,
That watched her on her nurse's arm,
That shielded all her life from harm,
At last must part with her to thee ;

Now waiting to be made a wife,
Her feet, my darling, on the dead ;
Their pensive tablets round her head
And the most living words of life

Breathed in her ear. The ring is on,
The " wilt thou " answer'd, and again
The " wilt thou " asked till out of twain
Her sweet " I will " has made ye one.

Now sign your names, which shall be read,
Mute symbols of a joyful morn,
By village eyes as yet unborn ;
The names are signed, and overhead

Begins the clash and clang that tells
The joy to every wandering breeze ;
The blind wall rocks, and on the trees
The dead leaf trembles to the bells.

Oh, happy hour, and happier hours
Await them. Many a merry face
Salutes them — maidens of the place,
That pelt us in the porch with flowers.

Oh, happy hour, behold the bride
With him to whom her hand I gave.
They leave the porch, they pass the grave
That has to-day its sunny side.

To-day the grave is bright for me,
For them the light of life increased,
Who stay to share the morning feast,
Who rest to-night beside the sea.

Let all my genial spirits advance
To meet and greet a whiter sun ;
My drooping memory will not shun
The foaming grape of eastern France.

It circles round, and fancy plays,
And hearts are warmed, and faces bloom,
As drinking health to bride and groom
We wish them store of happy days.

Nor count me all to blame if I
Conjecture of a stiller guest,
Perchance, perchance, among the rest,
And, tho' in silence, wishing joy.

But they must go, the time draws on,
And those white-favored horses wait ;
They rise, but linger ; it is late ;
Farewell, we kiss, and they are gone.

A shade falls on us like the dark
From little cloudlets on the grass,
But sweeps away as out we pass
To range the woods, to roam the park,

Discussing how their courtship grew,
And talk of others that are wed,
And how she looked, and what he said,
And back we come at fall of dew.

Again the feast, the speech, the glee,
The shade of passing thought, the wealth
Of words and wit, the double health,
The crowning cup, the three-times-three,

And last the dance ; — till I retire ;
Dumb is that tower which spake so loud,
And high in heaven the streaming cloud,
And on the downs a rising fire :

And rise, O moon, from yonder down
Till over down and over dale
All night the shining vapor sail
And pass the silent-lighted town,

The white-faced halls, the glancing rills,
And catch at every mountain head,
And o'er the friths that branch and spread
Their sleeping silver thro' the hills ;

And touch with shade the bridal doors,
With tender gloom the roof, the wall ;
And breaking let the splendor fall
To spangle all the happy shores

By which they rest, and ocean sounds,
And, star and system rolling past,
A soul shall draw from out the vast
And strike his being into bounds,

And, moved thro' life of lower phase,
Result in man, be born and think,
And act and love, a closer link
Betwixt us and the crowning race

Of those that, eye to eye, shall look
On knowledge ; under whose command
Is Earth and Earth's, and in their hand
Is Nature like an open book ;

No longer half-akin to brute,
For all we thought and loved and did,
And hoped, and suffered, is but seed
Of what in them is flower and fruit ;

Whereof the man, that with me trod
This planet, was a noble type
Appearing ere the times were ripe,
That friend of mine who lives in God,

That God, which ever lives and loves,
One God, one law, one element,
And one far-off divine event,
To which the whole creation moves.

NOTES.

THE AUTHOR.

Alfred Tennyson was born in 1809 at Somersby, Lincolnshire, England. He was educated at home, by his father, and at Trinity College, Cambridge. His first volume of poetry was published in 1830. Upon the death of Wordsworth in 1850, he was appointed poet-laureate. In 1883 he was made Baron Tennyson of Aldworth and Freshwater. He died October 6, 1892. His principal poems are *The Idylls of the King*, *In*

Memoriam, The Princess, Maud, Locksley Hall, Enoch Arden, and several poetical dramas.

THE SUBJECT.

Arthur Henry Hallam, in whose memory this poem was written, was the son of Henry Hallam, the distinguished historian. He was born in 1811, and therefore was by two years the junior of Tennyson. With the latter, he was educated at Trinity College, Cambridge. At a very early age he translated the sonnets of Dante's *Vita Nuova*, and wrote memoirs of Petrarch, Voltaire, and Burke, and a drama on the life of Raphael. These were published after his death in a volume of memoirs edited by his father. He died in Vienna, September 15, 1833.

THE POEM.

It is analogous to a series of sonnets, and is composed of 133 "short swallow-flights of song." The metre is the same throughout,—a stanza of four lines, the first rhyming with the fourth, the second with the third.¹ No number contains less than three stanzas, while one (lxxxiv.) has as many as thirty. "The whole spirit of the poem is the spirit of the sonnet as understood by Dante, Petrarch, and Shakespeare."

PROLOGUE. The eleven stanzas comprising the prologue to the poem were probably the last to be written. Internal evidence would indicate that the work was composed at different times during the years which intervened between Hallam's death and the date (1849) here given.

- I. Introductory. This division is introductory to the theme which forms the burden of the entire poem, and was probably one of the first parts written. It may, therefore, have been composed some sixteen years earlier than the prologue.

Stanza, 1. See Longfellow, *The Ladder of St. Augustine*:—

"Saint Augustine! well hast thou said,
That of our vices we can frame
A ladder, if we will but tread
Beneath our feet each deed of shame."

—**who sings**, etc. The reference is not to Longfellow, however, but more probably to Goethe. If men may thus rise on stepping-

¹ Lord Herbert of Cherbury (1581-1633) is sometimes accredited as the inventor of this metre. It is true that he was the first to make such verses truly melodious, but the stanza of this form had been used by earlier writers. It was very effectively employed by George Sandys in his *Paraphrase of the Psalms of David* (1636).

stones of their dead selves to higher things, cannot they also turn their losses into gains, and make their tears blossom and bear fruit?

2. **far-off interest of tears.** Compare with Shakespeare, *Sonnet 31* : —

" Many a holy and obsequious tear
Hath dear religious love stol'n from mine eye
As interest of the dead."

4. Compare with xxvii. 4.

II. Address to the Yew-Tree.

In England the yew-tree is extensively planted in graveyards, probably because of its tenacious growth and long life. With the ancient Druids it was an emblem of immortality.

" The eternal gloom of the yew-tree is felt to be congenial." — *Robertson*.

1. See Bryant, *Thanatopsis* : —

" The oak
Shall send his roots abroad and pierce thy mould."

See also Gray's *Elegy*, stanza 4; also xxxix., below.

- 2, 3. Compare with Milton, *Paradise Lost*, iii. : —

" Thus with the year
Seasons return; but not to me returns
Day or the sweet approach of even or morn,
Or sight of vernal bloom, or summer's rose,
Or flocks, or herds, or human face divine."

III. The voice of sorrow.

1. Compare with lix. See *Locksley Hall*, 76: "A sorrow's crown of sorrow is remembering happier things."

IV. The poet's musings with his heart.

V. Why give place to grief?

1. **words . . . half conceal the Soul within.** See Goldsmith, *The Bee*, No. iii.: "The true use of speech is not so much to express our wants as to conceal them." Talleyrand is credited with the common phrase: "Speech was given to man to conceal his thoughts."

3. **weeds.** Mourning garments. From A.-S. *wæd*, clothing. A common expression still current is "widow's weeds." — **in outline**, etc. The poet's grief shall be the subject of words — of this poem. But it is too great for a full expression; he can give it in outline only.

VI. The shock to parents and friends.

1. The fact of the commonness of bereavement is no consolation; it rather adds to grief: —

"There is no flock, however watched and tended,
But one dead lamb is there;
There is no fireside, howsoe'er defended,
But has one vacant chair." — *Longfellow, Resignation.*

7. Young Hallam was betrothed to Tennyson's sister, and she is the "poor child" whose sorrow is described in this and the following stanzas. From lxxv. 5, we learn that he died suddenly in Vienna.

VII. At the house of sorrow.

3. What more suggestive picture of desolation than the dark, deserted house, the drizzling rain at break of the blank day, and the "bald," silent street?

VIII. Two similes and a reason.

- 1-3. "The first simile is easily understood: "Like as a happy lover . . . so find I every pleasant spot," etc.
- 4-6. In the second simile is included the reason for inditing this poem, — the wish to plant "this poor flower of poesy . . . on his tomb," etc.

IX. Apostrophe to the ship that brings him home.

1. Hallam having died, as already noted, in Vienna, his body was brought home in a ship from Italy, and buried not far from the junction of the Severn with the Wye (see xviii., xix.). — **waft him o'er.** Compare with *Lycidas*, 64. — **holy urn.** So Milton says "destin'd urn" and "laureate hearse" (see note 56, page 93).
3. **Phosphor.** The light-bringer or morning star. Gr. *phos*, light, and *pherein*, to bring. See cxxi.
5. The poet's affection for his friend is here concisely expressed. "He seems to have looked upon their communion as a 'marriage of true minds,' in which he was the weaker or feminine element." Compare with xvii. 5.

X. Apostrophe to the ship, continued.

It is perhaps a foolish instinct with us, and yet it seems better that the dead should be buried beneath the sod than that their graves should be in the ocean, unknown and unmarked.

5. **fathom-deep.** "Full fathom five thy father lies." — *Shakespeare, Tempest.*

XI. An interlude of calm.

- 1-4. The calmness of the morning hour in autumn.

5. The calmness of death on the calm sea.

XII. The poet goes in spirit to meet the ship.

1. See Milton's sonnet, *To his Deceased Wife*.

2. **mortal ark.** The body. The metaphorical allusion is to the dove sent out by Noah to determine whether the waters of the flood had subsided. See *Genesis* viii. 8-12.

XIII. Tears for the chosen comrade.

XIV. To think of him as still alive is not so strange. To be able to realize that he is dead is even stranger.

"A simple child,
That lightly draws its breath,
And feels its life in every limb,
What should it know of death?"

Wordsworth, We are Seven.

XV. An autumn storm at evening.

Contrast the picture here drawn with that of the calm morning in xi.,—wild unrest with calm despair. Can both exist in the same mind? See xvi. 1.

XVI. The poet is surprised at such contrariety of feeling.

XVII. Another benison upon the ship.

1. The vessel arrives.

5. **Till all my widow'd race be run.** See note on ix. 5.

XVIII. The English burial near the banks of the Severn.

1. **from ashes . . . the violet.** So from the blood of Adonis springs the rose. See note 14, page 32. See Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, "And from her fair and unpolluted flesh may violets spring!"

XIX. Arthur's grave by the river.

1. **by the pleasant shore.** One would infer that the grave was near the river bank where the Severn joins the Wye. Hallam was buried inside Clevedon Church.

2. The tide at Chepstow near the junction of the Wye and Severn sometimes rises sixty feet; then it is that it "makes a silence in the hills."

4. The poet's grief is somewhat like the tide.

XX. Ebb and flow.

XXI. The poet's reason for singing.

2-5. The complaints of the critics.

6. **I do but sing**, etc. Compare with Pope, *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot*:—

“ I lisped in numbers for the numbers came.”

5. **latest moon**. The planet Neptune, discovered in 1846, probably just before the writing of these stanzas.

XXII. Four years of companionship.

1. Compare with *Lycidas*, 23–31:—

“ For we were nurs'd upon the self-same hill,” etc.

2, 3. **From April on to April went**, etc.

“ Three winters cold
Have from the forest shook three summers' pride;
Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn'd,
In process of the seasons have I seen;
Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,
Since first I saw you fresh, which yet art green.”

Shakespeare, Sonnet 104.

3. **Shadow**. The shadow of death, See *Job* xxiv. 17: “ For the morning is to them even as the shadow of death; if one know them, they are in the terrors of the shadow of death.”

XXIII. Recollections of that companionship.

3. **Pan**. See note 59, page 71.

6. **flute of Arcady**. See note 7, page 67.

XXIV. Imagination may paint the past in too bright colors.

1. **fount of Day**, etc. The very sun has its spots.

XXV. But Love's burden is light.

XXVI. Forgetfulness of the past is less to be desired than death.

1. **Still onward**, etc. Compare with Gray's *Elegy*, 3. The preceding verses were written in the autumn, very soon after Arthur's death. Some weeks have now passed, the Christmas time is approaching, and the poet again takes up his pen.

3–4. I would rather find “ that Shadow waiting with the keys,” than know that I would live indifferent to Love.

XXVII. The blessedness of having loved.

XXVIII. The Christmas bells.

XXIX. Christmas eve.

3. We will keep it for old custom's sake — because we were *wont* to do so, because we *used* to do so. Compare with lxxviii., below.

XXX. Christmas day.

How we kept the Christmas eve. Conflicting thoughts. Compare it with the second Christmas (see lxxviii.), and note the change which time brings.

XXXI. The present state of the dead.

In this and the next five flights we have a series of meditations on the condition of the departed, suggested by the story of the resurrection of Lazarus (see *John* xi., xii.).

XXXII. The devotion of Mary.

1. See *Luke* x. 42.

3. See *John* xii. 3.

XXXIII. Simple faith better than formal devotion.

XXXIV. Immortality our only hope.

XXXV. The moral chaos that would ensue if this were not so.

5-6. If Death were the end, then Love itself would be "mere fellowship," etc.

XXXVI. The incarnation of Christ.

3. the Word. "In the beginning was the Word . . . and the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth." — *John* i.

4. and to cease. Compare with Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*, 56: —

"To cease upon the midnight with no pain."

XXXVII. Superiority of revelation over uninspired poetry.

1. Urania. See note 2 on *Adonais*, page 136.

2. Parnassus. The dwelling place or favorite haunt of Apollo and the Muses.

3. Melpomene. The singing goddess. The Muse who presided over tragedy.

XXXVIII. Song cheers the weary way.

The spring approaches, we are "under altered skies," the "blowing season" of March is here, the "herald melodies" of singing birds are heard.

2. herald melodies. Compare with Shakespeare, *Sonnet* 1: —

"The only herald to the gaudy spring."

XXXIX. A second address to the yew-tree. See ii., and the note on the same.

XL. Death's parting is final.

6-8. The bride returns to her friends; but the Spirits breathed away come not again.

XLI. The poet fears that he will always be one life behind his friend. If this be the case, they can never be comrades again.

XLII. And yet may they not meet as teacher and pupil?

XLIII. Death may be a trance.

XLIV. Do the dead forget their former life?

1. If our souls existed before we were born, we have forgotten that existence. And may not the spirit in the next life also forget? —

"Our birth is but a sleep and a forgetting:
The soul that rises with us, our life's star,
Hath elsewhere its setting,
And cometh from afar." — *Wordsworth*.

2. And yet we cannot say that "some little flash, some mystic hint" of the former life does not sometimes come to us: —

"Not in entire forgetfulness,
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God who is our home." — *Wordsworth*.

3. And so may not some such mystic hint awaken the memory of the dead — if indeed Death so taste of forgetfulness. — **Lethean**. Pertaining to Lethe, the river of forgetfulness: —

"A slow and silent stream,
Lethe, the river of oblivion, rolls
Her watery labyrinth, whereof who drinks
Forthwith his former state and being forgets —
Forgets both joy and grief, pleasure and pain."

Milton, Paradise Lost, ii. 583.

XLV. Perhaps the consciousness of personal existence first comes to us in this present life and is never lost.

XLVI. The memory of our five years' friendship will surely remain.

XLVII. The doctrine of Pantheism is both vague and distasteful. See note on *Adonais*, xxxviii., page 147.

XLVIII. The mission of Sorrow.

2. Sorrow ministers to love, and cares not to "part and prove" the great problems of existence: —

"Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this withered embassy,
To witness duty, and to show my wit."

Shakespeare, *Sonnet 26*.

See iii.

4. The poet dares not "trust a larger lay," but sings only in "short swallow-flights of song," *i.e.* in these one hundred and thirty odd divisions of *In Memoriam*.

XLIX. The song may be light but the sorrow is deep. See cvi. 4, 5.

L. An invocation.

1. Thou wilt be my light.
2. Thou wilt be my strength.
3. Thou wilt aid my faith.
4. Thou wilt be a strong presence to support me.

LI. The superior wisdom of the dead.

2. Compare with Shakespeare, *Sonnet 61* :—

"Is it thy spirit that thou send'st from thee
So far from home into my deeds to pry,
To find out shames and idle hours in me?"

- 3-4. I fear not the searching eyes of the Spirits to whom even shame may be laid bare. For their larger wisdom will enable them to understand my weakness.

LII. The poet would not blame his own weakness overmuch.

LIII. Evil in retrospect.

Is there anywhere proof that evil is in any sense desirable or necessary?

4. "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good."—1. *Thessalonians* v. 21.

LIV. All things work together for good.

5. See cxxiv. 5.

LV. Is the universal desire of immortality a proof that existence is eternal?

- 4, 5. We know nothing. We have only Faith, and upon it we must rest everything.

LVI. The confusion of an appeal to Nature.

- 3-5. Shall man become dust to be blown about by the winds or locked up in the tomb? Is this the end? See *Hamlet*, v. 1.

7. Where shall we find an answer to these wearying doubts? "Behind the veil, behind the veil." Compare with cxviii.

LVII. The funeral bell.

3. See Shakespeare, *Sonnet 71*:—

"No longer mourn for me when I am dead,
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled."

It would seem that Tennyson's first intention was that the poem should end here.

LVIII. Why shed the fruitless tear?

- LIX. Apostrophe to Sorrow. Sorrow in a personified form has taken the place of the dead. Compare with Shakespeare, *King John*:—

"Grief fills the room up of my absent child,
Lies in his bed, walks up and down with me;
Puts on his pretty looks, repeats his words,
Remembers me of all his gracious parts,
Stuffs out his vacant garments with his form:
Then, have I reason to be fond of grief."

Compare with the poet's former address to Sorrow, in iii., above.

LX. Lowly love entertained for one in higher station.

LXI. The sincerity of my love for him.

3. the soul of Shakespeare. "The transcendent love for a beautiful soul, 'passing the love of woman,' of which the soul of Shakespeare was capable, is here hinted at, and the poet declares that even this love cannot surpass his for his friend. The allusion appears to indicate a deep and probably recent study of the Sonnets of Shakespeare." — *Tennysonianana*.

LXII. "Though an unworthy love, once past, perishes, . . .

LXIII. "Yet the higher Being may in some sort feel for the affection borne to it by the inferior." — *Robertson*.

LXIV. Does the great man remember the humble companion of his boyhood?

LXV. Our love must still be in some degree mutual.

LXVI. My loss is like the blind man's loss of sight. But even the blind man's "inner day can never die."

LXVII. In fancy, at night, I see the tablet over Arthur's grave in the dark church.

LXVIII. In my dreams he is not dead. See note at bottom of page 148.

1. Sleep, Death's twin-brother. See note on *Adonais*, vii. 7, page 139.

LXIX. A dream.

LXX. Out of the shadowiness of dreams Arthur's fair face appears and drives all phantoms away.

LXXI. Recollections of one pleasant episode in our lives.

LXXII. Anniversary of Arthur's death. A stormy, dreary day in autumn again. Compare with xcix.

LXXIII. Fame. He lived not to achieve it—and why should he? Compare with *Lycidas*, 78.

LXXIV. A simile. His family likeness to the good and great.

LXXV. His deeds while here were potential, but certainly, somewhere, he is now making his power active. Compare this and the next two flights with Shakespeare, *Sonnet 17*:—

“Who will believe my verse in time to come,
If it were filled with your most high deserts?
Though yet, heaven knows, it is but as a tomb
Which hides your life and shows not half your parts.
If I could write the beauty of your eyes
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The eye to come would say, ‘This poet lies;
Such heav’nly touches ne’er touch’d earthly faces.’
So should my papers, yellow’d with their age,
Be scorn’d like old men of less truth than tongue,
And your true rights be term’d a poet’s rage
And stretched metre of an antique song.”

LXXVI. Fame at its best is transient.

LXXVII. These verses may be but short-lived, yet what of that? I sing for love, and not for fame.

LXXVIII. The second Christmas. Compare with xxviii., xxix., above.

4. Grief is not so poignant as it was a year ago.

LXXIX. The closeness of our friendship.

Here begins a series of verses in which the poet musingly reviews the loving relationship which existed between him and Arthur.

LXXX. Suppose he had lived and I had died.

LXXXI. My love for him has been made mature through his death.

LXXXII. I murmur only because our intercourse has been terminated.
All else is well.

LXXXIII. The tardy spring of the new year. It whispers hope.

3. See *Lycidas*, 142-151; also note 16, page 34.

LXXXIV. Visions of what might have been.

3. See vi. 7, and the note to the same.

LXXXV. After all, another friendship is not impossible.

25. **clasping brother-hands.** This poem is probably addressed to Tennyson's brother-in-law (husband of Arthur's betrothed), and if so, must have been written at least seven years after Hallam's death.

LXXXVI. The coming of Spring brings hallowed influences, and whispers
"Peace!"

LXXXVII. Reminiscences of college life.

2. **high-built organs.** Compare with Milton, *Il Penseroso*, 161:—

"There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voiced quire below," etc.

LXXXVIII. The contrast of fierce and secret joy in the song of the nightingale. See Keats's *Ode to a Nightingale*.

3. See *Locksley Hall*:—

"Love took up the harp of life, and smote on all the chords with might."

LXXXIX. Memoirs of country delights.

6. **Tuscan poets.** Dante, Petrarch.

XC. A change of circumstances may make return of the dead to life undesirable to some, but never would his return be unwelcome to me.

XCI. Both spring and summer bring glad remembrances of him, and seem to bid him come back.

XCII. And yet even should he return in visible spirit-form, I could hardly believe it.

XCIII. Oh, that our spirits might at least have some sort of communion.

2. Compare with this from *Aylmer's Field*:—

"Star to star vibrates light: may soul to soul
Strike through a finer element of her own
So from afar touch as at once?"

XCIV. Only the pure in heart can hold communion with the dead.

XCV. Another reminiscence called up by reading his letters one night while tenting in the fields.

7. **defying change.** See Shakespeare, *Sonnet 123*: —

"No, Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change,
Thy registers and thee, I both defy."

5. **from me and night.** Compare with Gray's *Elegy*, 4.

XCVI. Doubt and faith.

6. **Sinai's peaks of old.** See *Exodus xxxii. 1-4*.

XCVII. The love of faith.

XCVIII. Vienna, the city of his death.

XCIX. The second anniversary of his death. See lxxii., above.

C. Every object I see recalls memories of him. "Once more he seems to die."

CI. On leaving the home of childhood. Tennyson left his ancestral home about the year 1835, and this division of the poem was probably written at that time.

3. **lesser wain.** The constellation *Ursa Major*, or the Great Bear, is frequently called "Charles's wain" (probably from *ceorles wain*, the countryman's wagon). Tennyson doubtless refers here to the constellation *Ursa Minor*, or the Little Bear.

CII. The remembrances which make the old home so dear are of two kinds.

2. **Two spirits, etc.** See Shakespeare, *Sonnet 144*: —

"Two loves I have of comfort and despair,
Which like two spirits do suggest me still."

CIII. The last night in my childhood's home, and what I dreamed.

"The vision presents the thought that, his memory going with us, the spirit of all that is wise and good and graceful sails with us in the life-voyage." — *Robertson*.

CIV. The approach of Christmas. Strange Christmas bells.

CV. The third Christmas eve. In a new house, and among strange associations. Compare with xxviii. and lxxviii.

CVI. The bells of the New Year.

CVII. Celebration of Arthur's birthday.

However bitter the winter weather, let us keep the day with festal cheer.

CVIII. The wisdom which sorrow brings.

CIX. Arthur's distinctive characteristics.

CX. His influence over his associates.

CXI. A true gentleman he was in heart and life : —

" The rank is but the guinea's stamp,
A man's a man for a' that." — *Burns*.

CXII. The growth of his intellectual power.

CXIII. What he would have been had he lived.

CXIV. Wisdom is heavenly, Knowledge is of earth. His was a character in which to knowledge was added reverence and charity, — and these three thus blended are Wisdom.

CXV. The coming of spring. Compare with xxxviii.

CXVI. Hopes aroused by Nature's re-awakening.

CXVII. The sorrow of separation will only enhance the delight of meeting.

3. **All the courses of the suns.** Compare with Shakespeare, *Sonnet* 59: "Five hundred courses of the sun."

CXVIII. The evolution of man from the lower forms of nature is but an indication that his upward progress will continue.

1. **dying Nature's earth and lime.** Compare with —

" Before the little ducts began
To feed the bones with lime." — *Two Voices*; 326.

CXIX. Another visit to the house which was Arthur's home. Compare with vii.

CXX. Man is not "a greater ape." He is born for higher things.

1. **Like Paul with beasts.** See 1 *Corinthians* xv. 32. This poem was written before the enunciation of the doctrine of evolution by Darwin, probably soon after the publication of *The Vestiges of the Natural History of Creation* (1844), which had produced much discussion on this and kindred themes.

CXXI. The evening and the morning star. As Hesper, the evening star, changes in time to Phosphor, the morning star, so my grief has changed from despair to hope. See ix., above.

CXXII. Did Arthur know of my despair and wretchedness? Then let him be with me now in my feeling of blessedness.

1. Compare with Shakespeare, *Sonnet 64*: —

"When I have seen the hungry ocean gain
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the watery main," etc.

CXXIII. The great changes which have taken place on earth, yet no change can make me think our separation final.

CXXIV. An answer to the sceptic's doubts. Do we ask, Where is God?
We feel Him, know Him, in our inmost hearts.

5. See liv. 5.

CXXV. In all these sorrowing verses, Hope and Love have been present;
for it was he that "breathed the spirit of the song."

2. Compare with Shakespeare, *Sonnet 72*: —

"Unless you would devise some virtuous lie,
To do more for me than mine own desert,
And hang more praise upon deceased I
Than niggard truth would willingly impart —
Oh, lest your true love may seem false in this,
That you for love speak well of me untrue."

CXXVI. The majesty of Love.

CXXVII. All is well. All is moving on towards God.

2. **fool-fury of the Seine.** The French revolution. We infer from the expression "thrice again" that he has in mind three revolutions. If so, this poem must have been written about the time of the popular uprising in 1848 and the dethronement of Louis Philippe.

CXXVIII. Love conquers doubt.

CXXIX. The ennobling power of the friendship which I have for him.

2. **Sweet human hand,** etc. Compare with, —

"In the blazon of sweet beauty's best,
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow."

Shakespeare, Sonnet 106.

CXXX. He is now a universal presence.

2. **I do not therefore love thee less.** Compare with, —

"I love not less though less the show appear."

Shakespeare, Sonnet 102.

CXXXI. A prayer for spiritual strength.

It is wonderful how generally the formalists have missed their way to the interpretation of this poem. It is sometimes declared with oracular decisiveness, that, if this be poetry, all they have been accustomed to call poetry must change its name. As if it were not a law that every original poet must be in a sense new; as if Æschylus were not a poet because he did not write an epic like Homer: or as if the Romantic poets were not poets because they departed from every rule of classical poetry. And as if, indeed, this very objection had not been brought against the Romantic school, and Shakespeare himself pronounced by French critics a "buffoon": till Schlegel showed that all life makes to itself its own form, and that Shakespeare's form had its living laws. So spoke the "Edinburgh Review" of Byron; but it could not arrest his career. So spoke Byron himself of Wordsworth; but he would be a bold man, or a very flippant one, who would dare to say now that Wordsworth is not a great poet. And the day will come when the slow, sure judgment of Time shall give to Tennyson his undisputed place among the English poets as a true one, of rare merit and originality. — *F. W. Robertson.*

I conceive that this monumental and superlative poem has done more than any other literary performance of the nineteenth century to express and to consolidate all that is best in the life of England, its domestic affection, its patriotic feeling, its healthful morality, its rational and earnest religion. Happy is the nation whose accepted and greatest poet thus voices its deepest instincts. Let who will adjure Englishmen to galvanize the corpse of Paganism, I shall take my place in the throng of simple folk who listen, well pleased, to the home-bred, heart-felt, honest strains of *In Memoriam*. — *Peter Bayne.*

It is the cry of the bereaved Psyche into the dark infinite after the vanished love. His friend is nowhere in his sight, and God is silent. Death, God's final compulsion to prayer, in its dread, its gloom, its utter stillness, its apparent nothingness, urges the cry. Moanings over the dead are mingled with the profoundest questionings of philosophy, the signs of nature, and the story of Jesus, while now and then the star of the morning, bright Phosphor, flashes a few rays through the shifting, cloudy darkness. And if the sun has not arisen on the close of the book, yet the aurora of the coming dawn gives light enough to make the onward journey possible and hopeful. — *George MacDonald.*

ELEGIACAL POEMS

*By William Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, John Webster, Henry Vaughan,
John Milton, Thomas Chatterton, Robert Burns, Percy Bysshe Shelley,
William Wordsworth, Charles Lamb, William Cullen Bryant, and
others*

If I were to give a sensible image of Elegy, I should not paint her as many have done, in long robes of sorrow, with dishevelled hair and a veiled brow, weeping over a coffin. I would rather represent her as a nymph, seated placidly, with her head upon her hand, full of feeling and contemplation. On her neglected locks should hang a torn garland, and in her lap should lie a wreath of faded flowers. A tomb should appear in the distance, half-concealed by a dark grove of cypresses. Behind should rise a hill full of budding roses, and illumined with the rays of the rising sun. — JACOBI.

Elegiacal Poems.



I.

EPITAPH.

HERE lies a piece of Christ ; a star in dust ;
A vein of gold ; a china dish that must
Be used in heaven, when God shall feast the just.

ROBERT WILDE (17th Century).

II.

EPITAPH.

IN this marble casket lies
A matchless jewel of rich price ;
Whom Nature in the world's disdain
But showed, and put it up again.

ANON.

III.

EPITAPH ON THE COUNTESS OF PEMBROKE.

UNDERNEATH this sable hearse
Lies the subject of all verse,
SIDNEY'S sister, PEMBROKE'S mother ;
Death ! ere thou hast slain another,
Learn'd and fair, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.

BEN JONSON (1574-1637).

IV.

EPITAPH ON ELIZABETH L. H.

WOULDST thou hear what man can say
In a little? Reader, stay.

Underneath this stone doth lie
As much beauty as could die :
Which in life did harbour give
To more virtue than doth live.
If at all she had a fault,
Leave it buried in this vault.
One name was ELIZABETH,
The other, let it sleep with death :
Fitter, when it died, to tell,
Than that it lived at all. Farewell !

BEN JONSON (1574-1637).

V.

A SEA DIRGE.

FULL fathom five thy father lies :
Of his bones are coral made ;
Those are pearls that were his eyes :
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change
Into something rich and strange ;
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell :
Hark ! now I hear them, —
Ding, dong, Bell.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE (1564-1616).

VI.

A LAND DIRGE.

CALL for the robin-redbreast and the wren,
Since o'er shady groves they hover
And with leaves and flowers do cover
The friendless bodies of unburied men.
Call unto his funeral dole
The ant, the field-mouse, and the mole
To rear him hillocks that shall keep him warm
And (when gay tombs are robb'd) sustain no harm ;
But keep the wolf far thence, that's foe to men,
For with his nails he'll dig them up again.

JOHN WEBSTER (15 -1654).

VII.

SOLDIERS' DIRGE.

How sleep the brave, who sink to rest
By all their country's wishes blest !
When spring, with dewy fingers cold,
Returns to deck their hallow'd mould,
She there shall dress a sweeter sod
Than fancy's feet have ever trod.

By fairy hands their knell is rung,
By forms unseen their dirge is sung :
There Honour comes, a pilgrim gray,
To bless the turf that wraps their clay ;
And Freedom shall awhile repair,
To dwell a weeping hermit there.

WILLIAM COLLINS (1721-1756).

VIII.

ROSE AYLMER.

AH ! what avails the sceptred race,
Ah ! what the form divine !
What every virtue, every grace !
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.

Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and of sighs
I consecrate to thee.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR (1775-1864).

IX.

A PAGAN EPITAPH.

IN this marble buried lies
Beauty may enrich the skies,
And add light to Phœbus' eyes ;

Sweeter than Aurora's air,
When she paints the lilies fair,
And gilds cowslips with her hair ;

Chaster than the virgin spring,
Ere her blossoms she doth bring,
Or cause Philomel to sing.

If such goodness live 'mongst men,
Tell me it : I [shall] know then
She is come from Heaven again.

ANON.

X.

BEREAVEMENT.

SHE dwelt among the untrodden ways
Beside the springs of Dove ;
A maid whom there were none to praise,
And very few to love.

A violet by a mossy stone
Half-hidden from the eye !
— Fair as a star, when only one
Is shining in the sky.

She lived unknown, and few could know
When Lucy ceased to be ;
But she is in her grave, and O !
The difference to me !

WILLIAM WORDSWORTH (1770-1850).

XI.

EPITAPH ON MRS. MARGARET PASTON.

So fair, so young, so innocent, so sweet,
So ripe a judgment and so rare a wit,
Require at least an age in one to meet.
In her they met ; but long they could not stay,
'Twas gold too fine to mix without allay.
Heaven's image was in her so well express'd,
Her very sight upbraided all the rest ;
Too justly ravish'd from an age like this,
Now she is gone, the world is of a piece.

JOHN DRYDEN (1631-1701).

XII.

EPITAPH ON THE EXCELLENT COUNTESS OF
HUNTINGDON.

THE chief perfection of both sexes joined,
With neither's vice nor vanity combined ;
Of this our age, the wonder, love, and care,
The example of the following, and despair ;
Such beauty, that from all hearts love must flow,
Such majesty, that none durst tell her so ;
A wisdom of so large and potent sway,
Rome's Senate might have wished, her Conclave may :
Which did to earthly thoughts so seldom bow,
Alive she scarce was less in heaven than now ;
So void of the least pride, to her alone
These radiant excellencies seemed unknown ;
Such once there was ; but let thy grief appear,
Reader, there is not : Huntingdon lies here.

LORD FALKLAND (1576-1633).

XIII.

ON THE RELIGIOUS MEMORY OF MRS. CATHERINE THOM-
SON, MY CHRISTIAN FRIEND.

WHEN Faith and Love, which parted from thee never,
Had ripened thy just soul to dwell with God,
Meekly thou didst resign this earthly load
Of death, called life ; which us from life doth sever.
Thy works and alms, and all thy good endeavour,
Stayed not behind, nor in the grave were trod ;
But, as Faith pointed with her golden rod,
Followed thee up to joy and bliss for ever.

Love led them on, and Faith, who knew them best,
Thy handmaids, clad them o'er with purple beams
And azure wings, that up they flew so drest,
And spake the truth of thee on glorious themes
Before the Judge; who thenceforth bid thee rest,
And drink thy fill of pure immortal streams.

JOHN MILTON (1608-1674).

XIV.

MARY.

IF I had thought thou could'st have died,
I might not weep for thee;
But I forgot, when by thy side,
That thou could'st mortal be.
It never through my mind had passed
That time would e'er be o'er,
And I on thee should look my last,
And thou should'st smile no more!

And still upon that face I look,
And think 'twill smile again;
And still the thought I will not brook
That I must look in vain.

But when I speak thou dost not say,
What thou ne'er left'st unsaid;
And now I feel, as well I may,
Sweet Mary, thou art dead!

If thou would'st stay, e'en as thou art,
All cold, and all serene—
I still might press thy silent heart,
And where thy smiles have been!
While e'en thy chill, bleak corse I have,
Thou seemest still mine own;

But there — I lay thee in thy grave,
And I am now alone !

I do not think, where'er thou art,
Thou hast forgotten me ;
And I, perhaps, may soothe this heart,
In thinking still of thee :
Yet there was round thee such a dawn
Of light ne'er seen before,
As fancy never could have drawn,
And never can restore !

CHARLES WOLFE (1791-1823).

XV.

HESTER.

WHEN maidens such as Hester die,
Their place ye may not well supply,
Though ye among a thousand try,
With vain endeavour.

A month or more hath she been dead,
Yet cannot I by force be led
To think upon the wormy bed,
And her together.

A springy motion in her gait,
A rising step, did indicate
Of pride and joy no common rate
That flushed her spirit.

I know not by what name beside
I shall it call : — if 'twas not pride,
It was a joy to that allied,
She did inherit.

Her parents held the Quaker rule,
Which doth the human feeling cool,
But she was trained in Nature's school,
Nature had blest her.

A waking eye, a prying mind,
A heart that stirs, is hard to bind,
A hawk's keen sight ye cannot blind,
Ye could not Hester.

My sprightly neighbour, gone before
To that unknown and silent shore,
Shall we not meet, as heretofore,
Some summer morning,

When from thy cheerful eyes a ray
Hath struck a bliss upon the day,
A bliss that would not go away,
A sweet forewarning?

CHARLES LAMB (1775-1834).

XVI.

THE SHEPHERD'S ELEGY.

GLIDE soft, ye silver floods,
And every spring.
Within the shady woods
Let no bird sing!
Nor from the grove a turtle dove
Be seen to couple with her love.
But silence on each dale and mountain dwell,
Whilst Willy bids his friend and joy farewell.

But of great Thetis' train
Ye mermaids fair

That on the shores do plain
Your sea-green hair,
As ye in trammels knit your locks
Weep ye; and so enforce the rocks
In heavy murmurs through the broad shores tell,
How Willy bade his friend and joy farewell.

Cease, cease, ye murmuring winds,
To move a wave;
But if with troubled minds
You seek his grave,
Know 'tis as various as yourselves
Now in the deep, then on the shelves,
His coffin tossed by fish and surges fell,
Whilst Willy weeps, and bids all joy farewell.

Had he, Arion like
Been judged to drown,
He on his lute could strike
So rare a sown,
A thousand dolphins would have come
And jointly strive to bring him home.
But he on shipboard died, by sickness fell,
Since when his Willy paid all joy farewell.

Great Neptune, hear a swain!
His coffin take,
And with a golden chain
(For pity) make
It fast unto a rock near land!
Where ev'ry calmy morn I'll stand,
And ere one sheep out of my fold I tell,
Sad Willy's pipe shall bid his friend farewell.

XVII.

ELEGY ON CAPTAIN MATTHEW HENDERSON.

O DEATH! thou tyrant fell and bloody!
The meikle devil wi' a woodie
Haur! thee hame to his black smiddie,
 O'er hurcheon hides,
And like stockfish came o'er his studdie
 Wi' thy auld sides!

He's gane! he's gane! he's frae us torn,
The ae best fellow e'er was born!
Thee, Matthew, Nature's sel' shall mourn
 By wood and wild,
Where, haply, Pity strays forlorn,
 Frae man exiled.

Ye hills, near neibours o' the starns,
That proudly cock your cresting cairns!
Ye cliffs, the haunts of sailing years,
 Where Echo slumbers!
Come join, ye Nature's sturdiest bairns,
 My wailing numbers!

Mourn, ilka grove the cushat kens!
Ye hazelly shaws and briery dens!
Ye burnies, wimplin' down your glens,
 Wi' toddlin' din,
Or foaming strang, wi' hasty stens,
 Frae lin to lin.

Mourn, little harebells o'er the lea;
O Ye stately foxgloves, fair to see;

Ye woodbines, hanging bonnilie
In scented bowers ;
Ye roses on your thorny tree,
The first o' flowers.

At dawn, when every grassy blade
Droops with a diamond at its head,
At even, when beans their fragrance shed,
I' the rustling gale,
Ye maukins, whiddin' through the glade,
Come join my wail !

Mourn, ye wee songsters o' the wood ;
Ye grouse, that crap the heather bud ;
Ye curlews, calling through a clud ;
Ye whistling plover ;
And mourn, ye whirring paitrick brood —
He's gane for ever !

Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled teals ;
Ye fisher herons, watching eels ;
Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels
Circling the lake ;
Ye bitterns, till the quagmire reels,
Rair for his sake !

Mourn, clam'ring craiks at close o' day,
'Mang fields o' flowering clover gay ;
And when ye wing your annual way
Frae our cauld shore,
Tell thae far warlds, wha lies in clay,
Wham we deplore.

Ye houiets, frae your ivy bower,
In some auld tree, or eldritch tower,
What time the moon, wi' silent glower,
Sets up her horn,
Wail through the dreary midnight hour
Till waukrife morn !

O rivers, forests, hills, and plains !
Oft have ye heard my canty strains :
But now, what else for me remains
But tales of woe ?
And frae my e'en the drapping rains
Maun ever flow.

Mourn, Spring, thou darling of the year !
Ilk cowslip cup shall kep a tear :
Thou Simmer, while each corny spear
Shoots up its head,
Thy gay, green, flowery tresses shear
For him that's dead !

Thou, Autumn, wi' thy yellow hair,
In grief thy swallow mantle tear !
Thou, Winter, hurling through the air
The roaring blast,
Wide o'er the naked world declare
The worth we've lost !

Mourn him, thou Sun, great source of light !
Mourn, Empress of the silent night !
And you, ye twinkling Starnies bright,
My Matthew mourn !
For through your orbs he's ta'en his flight.
Ne'er to return.

O Henderson ! the man ! — the brother !
 And art thou gone, and gone for ever ?
 And hast thou crossed that unknown river,
 Life's dreary bound ?
 Like thee, where shall I find another,
 The world around ?

Go to your sculptured tombs, ye great,
 In a' the tinsel trash o' state !
 But by thy honest turf I'll wait,
 Thou man of worth !
 And weep the ae best fellow's fate
 E'er lay in earth.

ROBERT BURNS (1759-1796).

XVIII.

THE MINSTREL'S ROUNDELAY.

OH sing unto my roundelay,
 Oh drop the briny tear with me,
 Dance no more on holiday ;
 Like a running river be.

My love is dead,
 Gone to his death-bed,
 All under the willow-tree.

Black his hair as the winter night,
 White his skin as the summer snow,
 Red his face as the morning light,
 Cold he lies in the grave below.

My love is dead,
 Gone to his death-bed,
 All under the willow-tree.

Sweet his tongue as the throstle's note,
Quick in dance as thought can be,
Deft his tabor, cudgel stout ;
Oh ! he lies by the willow-tree.

My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

Hark ! the raven flaps his wing,
In the briar'd dell below ;
Hark ! the death-owl loud doth sing
To the nightmares, as they go.

My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

See ! the white moon shines on high ;
Whiter is my true-love's shroud,
Whiter than the morning sky,
Whiter than the evening cloud.

My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

Here upon my true-love's grave,
Shall the barren flowers be laid ;
Not one holy saint to save
All the coldness of a maid.

My love is dead,
Gone to his death-bed,
All under the willow-tree.

With my hands I'll fix the briars,
Round his holy corse to grow,

Elfin fairies, light your fires,
 Here my body still shall be.
 My love is dead,
 Gone to his death-bed,
 All under the willow-tree.

Come with acorn-cup and thorn,
 Drain my heart's blood all away;
 Life and all its good I scorn,
 Dance by night or feast by day.
 My love is dead,
 Gone to his death-bed,
 All under the willow-tree.

Water-witches, crowned with reytes,
 Bear me to your lethal tide.
 I die! I come! my true love waits, —
 Thus the damsel spake, and died.

THOMAS CHATTERTON (1752-1770).

XIX.

THANATOPSIS.

To him who in the love of Nature holds
 Communion with her visible forms, she speaks
 A various language: for his gayer hours
 She has a voice of gladness, and a smile
 And eloquence of beauty; and she glides
 Into his darker musings with a mild
 And healing sympathy, that steals away
 Their sharpness ere he is aware. When thoughts
 Of the last bitter hour come like a blight
 Over thy spirit, and sad images
 Of the stern agony, and shroud, and pall,

And breathless darkness, and the narrow house,
Make thee to shudder and grow sick at heart,
Go forth under the open sky and list
To Nature's teachings, while from all around —
Earth and her waters, and the depths of air —
Comes a still voice : Yet a few days, and thee
The all-beholding sun shall see no more
In all his course ; nor yet in the cold ground,
Where thy pale form was laid with many tears,
Nor in the embrace of ocean, shall exist
Thy image. Earth, that nourished thee, shall claim
Thy growth, to be resolved to earth again ;
And, lost each human trace, surrendering up
Thine individual being, shalt thou go
To mix forever with the elements —
To be a brother to the insensible rock,
And to the sluggish clod which the rude swain
Turns with his share and treads upon. The oak
Shall send his roots abroad, and pierce thy mold.

Yet not to thine eternal resting-place
Shalt thou retire alone, — nor couldst thou wish
Couch more magnificent. Thou shalt lie down
With patriarchs of the infant world — with kings,
The powerful of the earth — the wise, the good,
Fair forms, and hoary seers of ages past,
All in one mighty sepulchre. The hills,
Rock-ribbed and ancient as the sun ; the vales
Stretching in pensive quietness between ;
The venerable woods ; rivers that move
In majesty, and the complaining brooks
That make the meadows green ; and, poured round all,
Old ocean's gray and melancholy waste —

Are but the solemn decorations all
Of the great tomb of man. The golden sun,
The planets, all the infinite host of heaven,
Are shining on the sad abodes of death,
Through the still lapse of ages. All that tread
The globe are but a handful to the tribes
That slumber in its bosom. Take the wings
Of morning, and the Barcan desert pierce,
Or lose thyself in the continuous woods
Where rolls the Oregon, and hears no sound
Save his own dashings — yet the dead are there!
And millions in those solitudes, since first
The flight of years began, have laid them down
In their last sleep — the dead reign there alone.

So shalt thou rest; and what if thou withdraw
In silence from the living, and no friend
Take note of thy departure? All that breathe
Will share thy destiny. The gay will laugh
When thou art gone, the solemn brood of care
Plod on, and each one, as before, will chase
His favorite phantom; yet all these shall leave
Their mirth and their employments, and shall come
And make their bed with thee. As the long train
Of ages glide away, the sons of men —
The youth in life's green spring, and he who goes
In the full strength of years, matron, and maid,
The speechless babe, and the gray-headed man —
Shall one by one be gathered to thy side
By those who in their turn shall follow them.

So live, that when thy summons comes to join
The innumerable caravan that moves

To that mysterious realm where each shall take
His chamber in the silent halls of death,
Thou go not like the quarry-slave at night,
Scourged to his dungeon ; but, sustained and soothed
By an unfaltering trust, approach thy grave
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch
About him, and lies down to pleasant dreams.

WILLIAM CULLEN BRYANT (1794-1878).

XX.

FRIENDS DEPARTED.

THEY are all gone into the world of light !
And I alone sit ling'ring here !
Their very memory is fair and bright,
And my sad thoughts doth clear.

It glows and glitters in my cloudy breast
Like stars upon some gloomy grove,
Or those faint beams in which this hill is drest
After the Sun's remove.

I see them walking in an air of glory,
Whose light doth trample on my days ;
My days, which are at best but dull and hoary,
Mere glimmering and decays.

O holy Hope ! and high Humility !
High as the Heavens above !
These are your walks, and you have shew'd them me
To kindle my cold love.

Dear, beauteous death ; the Jewel of the Just !
Shining no where but in the dark ;
What mysteries do lie beyond thy dust,
Could man outlook that mark !

He that hath found some fledg'd bird's nest may know
At first sight if the bird be flown ;
But what fair dell or grove he sings in now,
That is to him unknown.

And yet, as Angels in some brighter dreams
Call to the soul when man doth sleep,
So some strange thoughts transcend our wonted themes,
And into glory peep.

If a star were confin'd into a tomb,
Her captive flames must needs burn there ;
But when the hand that lock'd her up gives room,
She'll shine through all the sphere.

O Father of eternal life, and all
Created glories under thee !
Resume thy spirit from this world of thrall
Into true liberty !

Either disperse these mists which blot and fill
My perspective still as they pass ;
Or else remove me hence unto that hill
Where I shall need no glass.

HENRY VAUGHAN (1621-1695).

NOTES.

III.

The Countess of Pembroke, commemorated in these famous lines, was Mary Herbert, the sister of Sir Philip Sidney. It was she who wrote *The Dolefull Lay of Clorinda* (see note, page 65), and it was for her that Sidney composed the pastoral romance *Arcadia*.

sable hearse. Compare with "sable shroud," *Lycidas*, 22.

V.

This is a song of Ariel, from Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, i. 2.

VIII.

Charles Lamb says of this little lyric that it possessed for him a charm which he could in no manner explain. "I lived on it for weeks."

IX.

gilds cowslips with her hair. Compare this conception of Aurora's hair with Shelley's reference to the hair of Morning, *Adonais*, xiv. 3-5. See also note on the same.

X.

This exquisite little poem was written in Germany in 1799.

Dove. A stream which rises near Buxton in Derbyshire and finally flows into the Trent. It is often referred to by Walton in his *Complete Angler*, and by Charles Cotton who says:—

"O my beloved nymph, fair Dove,
Princess of rivers, how I love
Upon thy flowery banks to lie."

XII.

These lines are to the memory of Elizabeth, wife of Henry Hastings, fifth earl of Huntingdon. Mindful of the untruthfulness of too many epitaphs, Lord Falkland signed the original copy of these "by him who says what he saw,"—thus asserting that his praise of the Countess was not out of proportion to her deserts.

XIII.

Concerning Mrs. Catherine Thomson, we have no information, save that she was a friend of Milton's and died Dec. 16, 1646.

this earthly load of death called life. Compare with *Adonais*, xxxix. 2.

XV.

These lines were written in memory of Hester Savory, "a young Quaker you may have heard me speak of as being in love with for some years while I lived at Pentonville," says Lamb, "though I had never spoken to her in my life."

XVI.

This poem is selected from *Britannia's Pastorals*, 1616. Notice the resemblance in thought between several of these lines and similar expressions in the elegies by Bion and Moschus.

dolphins. See note 14, page 46.

XVII.

Burns, in the original title to this poem, characterizes Captain Henderson as "a gentleman who held the patent for his honours immediately from Almighty God."

Compare the greater part of this elegy with the first five stanzas of the *Lament for Bion*.

bairns — children.

burnies — brooks.

cairns — heaps of stones.

canty — merry.

cushat — wood-pigeon.

e'en — eyes.

eldritch — elfish.

houlets — owls.

hurcheon — hedgehog.

ilk, ilka — each, every.

lin — waterfall.

maukins — hares.

maun — must.

meikle — much.

paitrick — partridge.

rair — roar.

shaws — woods.

smiddie — smithy.

starns — stars.

studdie — anvil.

waukrife — sleepless.

whiddin' — skipping.

wimplin' — winding.

woodie — rope, halter.

XVIII.

This song occurs in Chatterton's *Tragedy of Ælla* (1769), and is probably oftener quoted than any other portion of that author's works.

gre — grow. **reytes** — water-flags. **lethal** — deadly, fatal.

Compare the second stanza with *Hamlet*, iv., v., 189-193.

XIX.

Thanatopsis was first published in the *North American Review* in 1817, and was written by Bryant when in his eighteenth year. The word is from two Greek words, *thanatos*, death, and *opsis*, view.

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